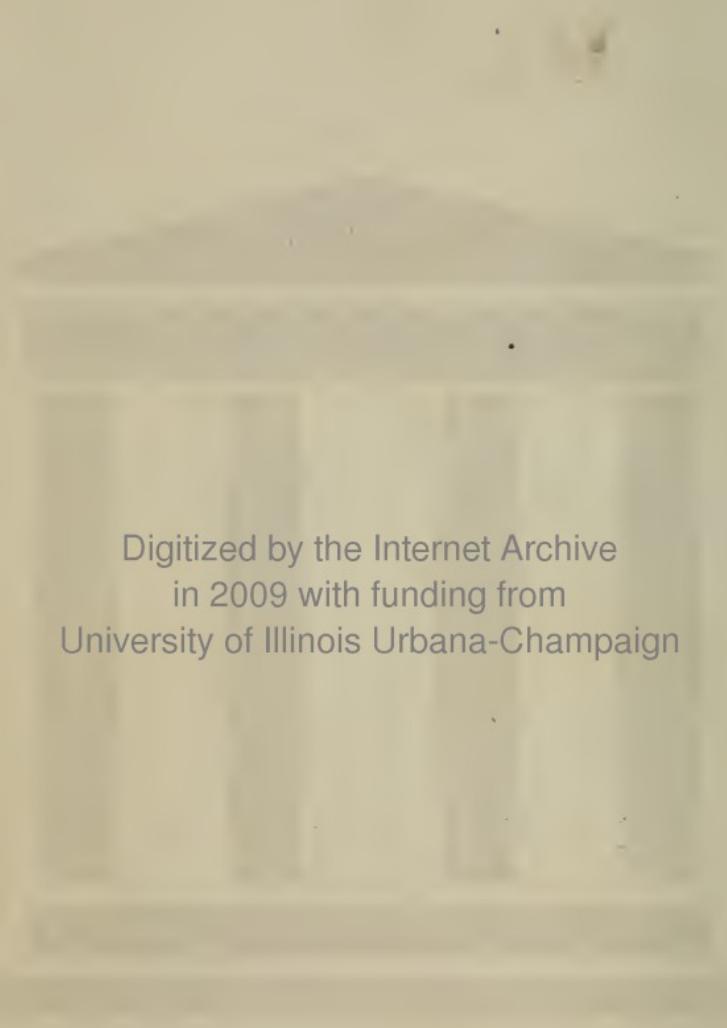


My Best Friend
Remember



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P R I D E
AND
I R R E S O L U T I O N :

A New Series of

THE DISCIPLINE OF LIFE.

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes
Such seemed the whisper at my side.
" What is't thou know'st, sweet voice ?" I cried.
" A hidden hope !" the voice replied.
To feel, although no tongue can prove,
That every cloud that spreads above
And veileth love—itself is love.

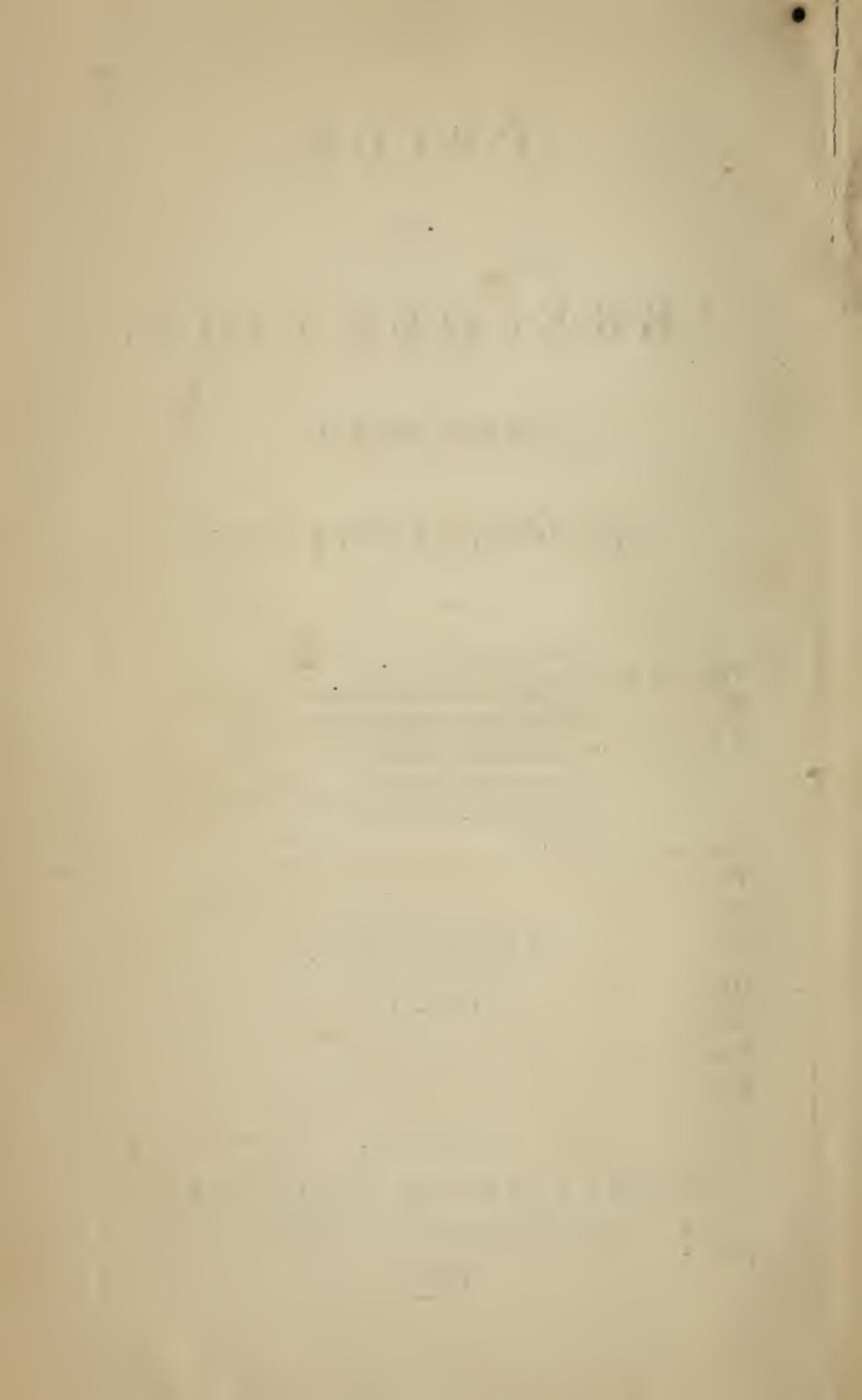
TENNYSON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1850.



SUSAN GREVILLE;

OR,

IRRESOLUTION.

A DOMESTIC STORY.

The slow sweet hours that bring us all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all things ill,
And all things good from evil.—

TENNYSON.

And is there aught on earth so rich and rare,
Whose pleasures may with virtue's pains compare
This fruit of patience—this the dear delight
That 'tis a trial in her Judge's sight.
Her part still striving duty to sustain,
Not spurning pleasure, not defying pain,
Never in triumph till her race is won,
And never fainting till her work be done.

CRABBE.

A MAN without decision can never be said to belong to himself—since if he dared to assert that he did, the puny force of some cause about as powerful, you would have supposed, as a spider, may make a captive of the hapless boaster the very next moment, and triumphantly exhibit the futility of the determination by which he was to have proved the independence of his understanding and his will. He belongs to whatever can seize him, and innumerable things do actually verify their claim on him and arrest him as he tries to go along—as twigs and chips floating near the edge of a river are intercepted by every weed, and whirled in every little eddy.

FOSTER'S ESSAY ON DECISION OF CHARACTER.

In the progress of their discourse the Marquis of Montrose added, “that course of theirs (i.e. the Covenanters) ended not but in the king’s death, and overturning the whole of the government.” When one of the ministers answered, “that was a *sectarian* party that rose up and carried things beyond the first and true intent of them,” he only said in reply, “*error is infinite.*”

MONTROSE AND THE COVENANTERS.

SUSAN GREVILLE.

CHAPTER I.

For not the blameless life, nor artless youth,
Nor beauty's bloom, nor innocence, nor truth,
Can move that Mind mysterious whose dread power
Doth chastening rule our transitory hour,
And low doth lay the proud man's haughtiest boast,
And oft the brightest virtue tries the most.

ANON.

THE belief in luck and ill luck, that there are lucky and unlucky persons, is a belief from which the mind naturally revolts; and rightly revolts; for the affairs of the universe, and if of the universe, the affairs also of individuals, are not guided by chance, as even the heathen has taught us.

And yet this doctrine of luck and ill luck is incorrect only in the words by which it is ex-

pressed; for painful as it may be to own it, painful and puzzling as may be the reflections into which it leads us, it is impossible for us to close our eyes to the fact, that some people are what is commonly called lucky—lucky in all the enterprises which they undertake—lucky also in the course of events which affect them, but over which they have no control—and that others are in the same way unlucky: in other words, that some men walk in sunshine all their life long, while others appear to be “born” above, far above, the common lot of mortals, “to trouble as the sparks fly upwards.”

There is, of course, no real difficulty in the question. The discipline of life is not the same for all. For the most part “mingled shades of joy and woe” appear to be man’s appointed lot—the lot most fitted to draw out and exercise the virtues, and overcome the evils of his nature; and where it is otherwise ordained, where a perpetual cloud appears to rest on the head of any human being, we must believe that although the reasons for such a destiny are to us dark and incomprehensible,

yet that it is guided by the same wisdom and with the same fitness for the trial of individual character, as that which shapes the course of the rest of the world around us.

I believe it has been often remarked that some of the best and holiest, the jewels of our race, have been most singled out for trial. I do not mean so much those who have been made holy by trial, as those who appear at intervals, "like autumn violets sweet and rare," from their childhood upwards living amongst us rather as visitants from another world than inhabitants of this. I believe such are often destined to peculiar troubles; and it need not surprise or puzzle us that it is so, if we could but remember that sorrow, though its general character may be chastening, yet need not necessarily be so; it may sometimes be rather a gift, a precious opportunity granted to show forth to men, and to offer to God those hidden virtues, which "like the plant that throws its fragrance from the wounded part," require the wounds and sufferings of this life for the due exhibition of their beauty and power.

I was led into some such reflections as these,

as I stood after a long absence on the hill which overlooks the beautiful and romantic country surrounding the woods and grounds belonging to Keevor Hall, and meditated on the fate of one with whom for many years I was thrown into perpetual contact—I mean Susan Greville, the heroine of my story.

The circumstances which led me into that contact are immaterial for the reader to know; it suffices that the tale I tell is told not from hearsay, but from actual observation. I do not mean to say that I vouch for the accuracy of every word which I have recorded. There were many occasions on which I was not and could not be present, and I have rather endeavoured to convey a truthful and life-like representation of characters which made a deep impression upon me at the time, and which I had unusual opportunities of studying, than to confine myself to the record of deeds which I *saw* done, and words which I *heard* spoken. For the truth of my representation, however small in other ways the merits and interest of my tale may be, I fearlessly appeal to all who visited at Keevor Hall during the time of which I speak.

I feel that my story needs a preface and an apology—the events are too few—the characters want diversity—the interest is confined to one chain of circumstances, and one quiet spot. But the tale, as I before said, is told from observation: those incidents which passed around me I have related, and (with but few exceptions) those alone; and if the characters which I have endeavoured to depict fail to interest others as once they interested me, I fear that an apology will have little effect in producing the result which I desire; and so (though deeply conscious of the necessity for an apology) I proceed without more words to my tale.

Old Mr. Greville, of Keevor Hall, was remarkable for two things—family pride and ill-temper. For the pride there might be some excuse, for the family of Greville had lived in the large, straggling, irregular, but picturesque house of Keevor, for more years, as the old housekeeper said, “than mortal man could count;” and of this family many a one had borne a distinguished part in the political history of their generation. If pos-

terity has forgotten their names, it was but the more reason that their descendant should cherish their memory; but there was one whom posterity has not forgotten, and the favourite pride, the treasured remembrance of the old man's heart, was that he could count among his ancestors Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, the cotemporary and friend of Sir Philip Sydney.

For the pride, then, some excuse was allowed, but what could be said in defence of the violence of his temper? Nothing was said, for nothing was needed. Of excuses for any of his failings Mr. Greville never dreamed. If he thought about his temper at all as a matter of reflection, which was doubtful, it was rather to count it as a proper attribute—an additional perfection in the character of the far-descended and respected Lord of Keevor.

Two stars cannot shine in one sphere, and two reigning propensities are very apt to interfere with the gratification of each other—it was so in this case. Mr. Greville's pride was conquered by his ill-temper. Although the support of his family in its ancient honour

and esteem was the all-engrossing subject of his thoughts, it was he himself who struck the fatal blow which diminished its present honour, and opposed a barrier to its increasing grandeur. He had two sons—the eldest a calm-tempered, indolent, contented, peaceable man; the second inheriting something of his father's temper. It might be natural to suppose that it was with the latter that occasions of difference arose; that with the calm, peaceable man it could not fail but that all things should go on in calm and peace. But we should suppose wrongly. There are few things more irritating to the irritable than perfect calm. A soft answer, indeed, turneth away wrath; but it must be the soft answer of restraining principle, not of indifferent equanimity. The calmness of his eldest son in all disputes, and under all excitements, acted like a perpetual fire upon the temper of the father; and under the constant flame of irritation, the gentler glow of paternal feelings died away.

With Ralph Greville, the second son, there were occasional disputes; but as the two irri-

table tempers boiled over together, they also tranquillized together, and the mutual storm was followed by a mutual calm. Ralph likewise had, by absence, a strong hold on his father's affections. Though too well provided for to need a profession, he was of a roving disposition; and while his brother remained immovable at home, he was absent for months, and even years, taking up his abode now in one country, now in another. Whatever, therefore, were his original claims on his father's favour, they were increased tenfold by imagination and absence, and all the love withdrawn from the elder son was lavished upon him.

Such being his feelings, Mr. Greville's first impulse was to disinherit his natural heir. His estates were at his own disposal. He himself was the last in an entail, and a love of power had prevented him from making any fresh settlement of his property. But this desire was counterbalanced by other feelings. Two things in particular weighed in the opposite balance, and declared against such an extreme proceeding. In the pride of his heart

he had called his eldest son Fulke, and to deprive Fulke Greville of Keevor, was more than he could calmly contemplate. A second and stronger reason against such a measure was to be found in the affection which he bore towards the eldest of his son's children, little Susan Greville—he could not prevail upon himself to drive *her* from the house in which she was born.

Under these conflicting emotions he decided upon a half measure. Out of an income of 14,000*l.* a year, the estate of Keevor, amounting in value to something under one-third of that sum annually, was left to Mr. Fulke Greville; the remainder of the property, which lay chiefly in the same county, although at a considerable distance, was settled on the youngest son, Ralph.

It is possible that Mr. Greville in some degree blinded his eyes to the injurious effect which such a disposition of his property must have upon the honour and influence of his house, and yet, even while listening to the voice of passion, he did not entirely forget his former hopes and dreams.

With a far-seeing glance he contemplated the possibility of reuniting the divided property at some future time; for in a formal letter of directions, found with and referring to his will, he gave orders to both his sons to pursue a specified line of conduct, in case a certain contingency should occur. What these directions were, I will not now pause to explain, as, at the time of my first acquaintance with the family at Keevor, the contingency contemplated had not occurred.

Having arranged his affairs to his full satisfaction, and having, as he thought, tempered justice with mercy in a manner unequalled in the annals of history, old Mr. Greville died after a very short illness. There was some reason to suppose that had his life been prolonged, he would have altered the arrangements on which he had bestowed so much care and thought. When, on the evening of the day before his death, little Susan Greville was lifted up upon his bed to wish him good night; and in her simple, touching, childish voice, said, “God bless you, grand-papa!” tears came into the old man’s eyes, and he

remained for some hours in profound thought. When he roused himself from his apparent stupor, it was to desire that his lawyer might instantly be sent for. Before he could arrive, however, Mr. Greville was dead.

It was five years after this time that I first became acquainted with Mr. Fulke Greville. He had never moved from Keevor, and was living there with his wife and two children in perfect comfort and happiness, although on a scale of considerable economy. He was still the same quiet, indolent man; wrapt in his wife, his children, and his garden, contented with the present, closing his eyes to all troubles or trials in the future, and leaving to Mrs. Greville the entire management of his house, and of the property which had devolved upon him.

His brother had in the same manner pursued his old tastes, and had settled himself abroad. He had married earlier than Mr. Fulke Greville, and had also been early left a widower with one little boy. At the time of my first visit at Keevor, the intelligence of his second marriage had just been received.

I have endeavoured, in as short a compass as possible, to explain the circumstances, domestic and pecuniary, of the Greville family, which was necessary for the understanding of my tale.

CHAPTER II.

Her eye was patient, and she spoke in tones
So sweet and of such pensive gentleness,
That the heart heard them.

MADOC.

I MUST introduce you to the two little sickly children of Mr. and Mrs. Greville.

By the side of a trellised casement-window, which opened to the ground and led into the garden—the walls on one side thick with ivy, on the other fresh and scented with jessamine—a little boy was lying on a sofa. His limbs were half covered with a shawl, and his position prevented you from seeing, what at other times was but too apparent, that he was a cripple. A little girl sate on a low stool by his side. A book of stories was in her hand, with which she was endeavouring to amuse

the boy, and her work lay on a chair which was drawn close to her seat.

There was little beauty in either of the children. Their skins were pale and sallow; and their brown hair was cut close round their temples. Their eyes were very dark, but without any peculiar beauty of size or brilliancy, and beneath the under-lid of each there was that deep, black mark, which speaks so painfully of weakness and ill health.

And yet there was something in the appearance of both the children which could not fail to attract the attention of all, except the very determined admirers of beauty. There was in their countenances a very remarkable expression of earnestness and intensity, which—although speaking of acquaintance with thought and suffering, and therefore painful to see at so early an age—excited feelings of anxious and lively interest. In addition to this, there was—but it was more on the face of the girl than of the boy (in him there was something of restlessness)—a look of tranquillity and serenity which I had never seen on any countenance before. She might look sorrowful,

she might be suffering pain of body or of mind, but it was still the same,—this expression never changed. It was as if an angel of peace continually hovered over her, and covered her with his wings, or, as Coleridge has beautifully expressed it,—“It (peace) lay on her countenance like a steady, unshadowed moonlight.”

“Don’t read any more, Susan,” said the little boy, with a sigh; “I can’t listen any longer.”

Susan put down her book, and turned her eyes sorrowfully and inquiringly upon her brother.

“Oh, Susan! I do feel so very, very ill,” he said, with another sigh. “I think I get worse every day.”

“Can I do anything for you, Charley?” asked the little girl, with her earnest, pitying look: “are you in very great pain?”

“No, not pain,—at least, not great pain. Sometimes I wish it *was* pain; I think I could bear it better. I am so tired,—my bones ache so,—I seem to ache all over;” and he moaned, and turned restlessly on his couch.

" You have been lying here so long : let me lift you up a little while. There now, is that better ? " and, with the handiness and gentleness of an experienced nurse, she pulled up and arranged the cushions that were supporting him.

" Yes, that is better. Sit down again, Susan. Yes, I feel quite comfortable now. But, Susan," he continued, after a short silence, during which the little girl had taken up her work, " I don't think this can go on much longer. Do you know, Susan, I think that I shall very soon die."

There was a quick, sorrowful glance from the little girl, but no exclamation, no answer.

" I don't think I mind, Susan. Dying ! I wonder what dying is ! I wonder what it is like ! I wonder if it is very painful ! What do you think, Susan ? do you think it is very painful to die ? "

" Mamma says we shouldn't think about death in that way, Charley," said the little girl, in her soft, sad voice. " She says, when the angel of death comes to fetch us away to happiness, that we should go, and not be afraid."

"I shan't be afraid, Susan; I am sure I shan't; I think I shall be very glad to go, only for one thing."

Again the earnest glance from the little girl, but no question.

"I don't mind leaving Keevor, Susan; I don't mind never seeing again the sun, or the trees, or the flowers; I don't mind their putting me in the ground by poor grandpapa, because I know I shan't stay there,—shall I, Susan?—I know I shall fly away, and see more beautiful things than any we have here; but, Susan, I can't die and go away from you,—I can't be happy, unless you are with me,—I don't care for beautiful things, unless you see them, too."

The little girl never raised her eyes,—the tears were blinding them,—but she worked away quickly and nervously at her work. After a moment, she said, in a low faltering voice, "Don't, Charley—don't; mamma says it is not right to speak like that."

"Why isn't it right, Susan? It's quite, quite true. I don't think I could be happy even in heaven, unless you were there. Shall

you be happy without me, when I go away and leave you alone?"

Such a look from the child—such a quivering smile was her answer!

The little boy had now worked himself up into an excitement of feeling; he now went on in a voice whose tenderness would have melted a heart of stone—"What *shall* you do, Susan, when I am dead? I often think, and think, and I can't fancy you without me. You never do anything but take care of me, and nurse me, and try and make me happy; what *shall* you do, Susan, when you have no one to take care of any more?"

The poor little girl struggled hard to restrain herself, but in vain. "Oh! Charley, Charley, don't—please, don't! I know I shall be able to bear anything that comes, but don't talk of it now,—please, don't,—I cannot bear it now." And in a perfect passion of grief, she laid her head down upon the couch, while the boy, almost with a look of pleasure, stroked her dark hair with his small, wasted hand.

It was at this moment that I came in from the garden, at the open trellised window. The

little girl raised her head, and her eyes—and my eyes in the same instant, fell upon a deep red stain on the couch where she had laid her face. I was about to make an exclamation of surprise and alarm, but with instant self-possession, she held her finger to her lips, to command—gentle as it was, I felt it as a command—to command my silence; then moving and arranging the folds of the shawl, she got up and left the room, merely saying, as she passed me, and held out her little hand—

“ Will you amuse Charley, while I go away for a little while?—I shall soon be back.”

Notwithstanding my anxiety on her account, seeing that it was her desire to conceal what had happened from her brother, I obeyed her orders, and sate down to amuse the little boy to the best of my power. I began to give him an account of some curious birds, which I had been seeing at a shop in a town at some distance, but he listened to me listlessly, and with indifference, and, at the first convenient pause in my conversation, he looked very earnestly at me, and remarked, “ I have been making Susan cry.”

"And why so, Charley?" I asked. "Do you like to see her tears—I don't like it at all."

"Sometimes," he replied; and he still looked at me with a look in which there was a kind of arch melancholy.

"Why do you like it, my boy?—if you love your sister, shouldn't you like better to make her smile?

"Angels don't cry; do they?" he asked—as if there was some deep meaning in his question.

"No," I said, shaking my head; "at least, we have no reason to think they do; if they do" My mind was wandering from my young companion, as it is but too apt to do, into regions of speculation, as to the possibility of angel's tears; but he recalled me to himself.

"Then, that is why I like to make Susan cry," he said, with a slight smile. "Do you know I am sometimes afraid that she is an angel, and will fly away from this world before me,—but when I see her cry, then I know ——"

"Then you know," I said, taking the words from his mouth, and finishing them according to my own fancy—"then you know that she is no unsorrowing angel, but a poor young creature sent down to be tried and tempted upon earth." For, often, and often when I had looked at that young, calm, earnest face, I had said to myself that no ordinary portion of trial must be destined for her.

We were interrupted by the entrance of the nurse, Bessie, as the children called her, who came into the room in her bonnet and shawl, and with the little boy's hat in her hand.

"Come, Master Charley," she said, "the pony is at the door, and you must not keep it waiting, for fear of the rain; come along, my dear, I've brought you your hat, you see." She raised him on the couch, and held out to him the crutches necessary to support his weak deformed limbs.

"Won't Susan come?—Bessie," he said, "I want Susan."

"Miss Greville is going to stay with her mamma. Come, my dear, or we shall have a shower."

"But I hate to go without Susan," he cried, with tears in his eyes. His feelings had been excited, and had made him nervous and fretful, which was not usual to him.

"I know you do, my dear," said the kind nurse; "but, Mr. Charley, even you must do what you don't like sometimes. Miss Greville don't like to stay, but she stays because her Mamma wishes her to stay. Come along, my dear, and be as good as Miss Greville is."

I don't think the little boy was quite satisfied, but he slowly crept to the door, and was placed on his pony; a boy stood ready to lead him.

Anxious as I was about Susan, more especially when I remarked a grave sad look on the nurse's face, I could not make any inquiries until we were alone. When the pony had started, I held Bessie back, and asked if she was alarmed about Miss Greville.

"Not now, sir," she said, with a grave shake of the head; "I think it will not be much just now; but into the future, sir, with these two poor children, I am almost afraid to look. This is not the first time that it has

happened; when her grandpapa died five years ago, Miss Greville cried very much, and she broke a vessel in the throat, they said. We must hope, sir, we must hope, and if they are taken away before their time, why, sir, it is a happy thing for the young to die. but I must amuse Master Charley;" and she left me.

Doubtless, it is happy for the young to die—untainted to pass to their reward—and happy, too, is it for those who, through the trials and temptations of this world, are permitted to win for themselves a brighter crown than the crown of childish innocence. To the first of these destinies the poor sickly boy upon whom my eyes were resting was called—to the second. but no, I will not fore-stall my tale.

Something more than a year after the date of this conversation, little Charley declined and died; and at eleven years old Susan Greville became the heiress of the old picturesque family place of Keevor Hall.

CHAPTER III.

“Dost thou like the picture?”

LADY OF LYONS.

“It is my wish and desire that in the too probable event of the death of my grandson, Fulke Charles Greville, a marriage should be contracted between my grand-daughter Susan, and her cousin Julian Greville. And it is my wish and desire that the engagement for this marriage should be entered upon when my grand-daughter, Susan Greville, shall have attained the age of seventeen.”

The above is an extract from the letter of directions annexed, by old Mr. Greville to his will.

At the time of his death, the death of his grandson was, as he said, too probable; but

soon after that event, the child appeared to rally ; and although a long life was scarcely to be desired for him, yet it was not strange that his parents should shrink from the contemplation of his early loss, and that the plans of the worldly old man should escape from their memory.

Their attention was recalled to them by a letter from Mr. Ralph Greville, written from Florence, a few months after Charley's death. In this letter he informed them of his own willingness to agree to his father's directions, provided always, that on coming of age, his son should not be averse to it. "Of this, however," he said, "I have no expectation. Julian is now fifteen, and is a promising, well-disposed boy, a million times cleverer than his father. Indeed, both in appearance and character, he takes more after my poor Bianca than from me. I have already spoken to him on the subject of this marriage, in strict confidence, (I have not even mentioned it to my wife,) and I assure you that his imagination is very favourably impressed, I may say excited, with the idea of his little wife. Let me know, my

dear Fulke, what your feelings are on this matter. It shall not be my fault if the property of our ancestors is not again united in our children."

The answer of Mr. Greville to this letter was short, which was usual in his communications, and decisive, which was unusual.

"Keevor Hall, May —, 18—.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I am of the same mind as you are; provided always that Susan has no objection. My wife disapproves of your consulting Julian so early; she will not have the subject mentioned to Susan till she is seventeen. I have no doubt of my poor father's plan being for the best. Shall we ever see you at Keevor again. The tulips have been in great beauty this year.

"I am, ever yours,

"FULKE GREVILLE."

From this time little communication took place between the families till the time mentioned by old Mr. Greville, for the contraction of the marriage, drew near.

Meanwhile Susan had grown from the pale, sickly child, into a woman.

She had been rather strictly brought up. Mrs. Greville was a woman of strong mind and deep feeling, but in her manners and ideas she was somewhat stiff and precise. She had been educated in what is now called the old-fashioned style of education, that is, with little attention to graces and accomplishments, but with a thorough knowledge of household concerns, and great care for the moral culture of the mind; and she had pursued the same plan in the education of her daughter.

I am in many points an admirer of the old style of education, but its incompatibility with the lighter and brighter graces of the new, I never could understand. The sense of beauty is also a gift and a talent, and I do not see, where there is the time and power for its cultivation, that we are excusable in neglecting to cultivate it. Above all, I think that Mrs. Greville was inexcusable in neglecting it in the education of her daughter. She was not rearing a flower to be picked up as it

seemed by chance, but was preparing a wife for one, whom it required but a little thought to perceive was receiving an education in every way opposed to the system she was pursuing with her own child.

Mrs. Greville, however, with all her strength of mind and vigorous judgment, was what has been called “a bundle of prejudices.” Her vision was firm and clear, but it was narrow. Accomplishments were with her but another name for frivolity, and with frivolity she was engaged in a perpetual warfare. Concentration of the mind was her great principle, dissipation of the mind her great aversion. Susan, therefore, was brought up much like one of the maidens of old. Her mind was stored with useful practical knowledge: she was urged to read, but such books only were allowed her as would lead her to think; and that she *might* have time to think, some hours of every day were allotted to work—to work of all kinds, both useful and ornamental. Her time was regularly portioned out; idleness was never allowed. Air and exercise had been ordered for the strengthening of her health,

and her mother encouraged her to be much out of doors; but the hours of air and exercise were also used as education; every walk had a definite duty assigned to it. Every day she was taught to look upon as lost, in which she had not, by the bestowal of charity, or by the gift of kind looks and kind words, gladdened the heart of some of the poor around her. There was little to quarrel with in the education; it was most excellent as a foundation, but it was narrow. Many characters it would have formed into a mere machine. That Susan escaped being a machine, I have always considered to be owing (partly, of course, to natural disposition) but principally to the independence of thought and action, which her early and lonely intercourse among the poor was calculated to give her. Tales were poured into her youthful ears,—confidences of joys, and sorrows, and sufferings,—which excited in her breast an unextinguishable curiosity, and an undying sympathy with humanity.

Though there were occasional indications of a taste very much at variance with her mother's, Susan submitted herself to Mrs.

Greville's plans and regulations, not only obediently, but with a willing mind. She loved her mother passionately, and this feeling was enough; her own tastes were as nothing compared to the joy of gaining one quiet smile of approbation from her lips. She was the same being all her life long; "she lived not in herself, but was a portion of those around her."

I suppose the earnest care bestowed upon the education of a child, is never ultimately lost, even where it has been mistaken; but it must be a painful thought to parents and teachers to reflect how often their prejudices may have interfered with the future happiness of those over whom they have anxiously and unceasingly watched. Often in after-days I sighed as I thought, "Were Mrs. Greville here, she would repent."

I must not, however, let it be supposed that because Mrs. Greville was stiff and precise, she had made Susan so, too. Something of the calmness of her mother's manners Susan had either caught, or had inherently; but what in the mother was formality, in the daughter was

grace. In my remarks on Susan's education, I speak only so far as her happiness was concerned; for myself, I never wished her to be other than she was.

I wish I could describe her to you; but the grace that hung about every quiet movement of her small, slight figure, was a thing to be felt, not described. She was not beautiful; nay, in any proper sense of the word, she was not even pretty. Her dark eyes were not large, or lustrous, or brilliant; her features had no regularity of form; her skin was pale, too pale. There was something quakerlike in the simplicity of her dress, and in the plain braids of her dark hair, but still there was about her a softness, a stillness, a serenity—

“ From all things outward she had won
A tearful grace, as though she stood
Between the rainbow and the sun.”

In her smile, in the light of her dark eyes there was a sweetness, a thoughtfulness, a compassion that seemed to spring from an unfathomable fountain of love within, and yet when the sorrows of others, or her own, were

reflected too deeply and sadly on the mirrors of those eyes, the serenity of her brow remained unchanged. The peculiarity of her countenance lay in this contrast—the intensity of feeling with the intensity of repose. She reminded you of moonlight resting upon clouds.

One morning, she was seated at her embroidery frame in a recess of the long old-fashioned drawing-room, which was peculiarly appropriated to her use. Mrs. Greville quietly entered the room, and stood beside her. Susan looked up, and rose from her seat, but, touching her shoulder, her mother motioned to her to remain where she was.

After a few criticisms on her work, she sat down opposite to her, and fixed her eyes with some gravity upon her face.

“Do you remember, Susan,” she began, at last, “that you are seventeen to-day?”

“Yes, mamma,” Susan said, sadly, even reproachfully.

“I know,” continued her mother, “that since the time when on this day you were visited with so great an affliction, you do not

wish to be reminded of your birthday. You may trust me, Susan; I mention it with no desire to make it a day of rejoicing, but because I am bound by a promise to talk to you seriously on this day upon a subject of grave interest to me and to yourself." She paused, and examined her daughter's countenance, then inquired, "Do you remember your grandfather, Susan?"

"Yes, mamma—oh, yes!"

"You are right, my child, to remember him—he loved you, and *you* have only cause to think with gratitude of his memory. I wish I could bury in oblivion the faults of which he was guilty towards others; but his own wishes have made this impossible. Hitherto you have heard nothing of our family affairs. I tell you them now, not that you should blame the dead, but because the truth is the wisest and the fittest to be spoken at all times, and because it is right that you should consider all the circumstances of the case, before you come to a decision upon the point on which a decision is necessary."

She then briefly detailed the circumstances

with which the reader is acquainted; her daughter listening with interest, but without any idea that her destiny was involved in them.

"Do you know, Susan, that you are your father's heiress?" she inquired, at last.

"Yes, mamma," she replied, with the sorrowful look of her dark eyes.

"I have told you, my child, that it was your grandfather's wish that the two properties should be again united. Do you see how it can be accomplished?"

"Mamma, you do not think I wish to be an heiress," she said, reproachfully.

Her mother smiled, and shook her head. "That will not do, Susan—you must think again."

But no thought came to Susan's aid. The word marriage had *never* been addressed to her; it was hardly probable, therefore, that such an idea as that of the intended arrangement should present itself.

"I see I must tell you," her mother said, quietly. "It was your grandfather's last wish that the properties should be united by

your marriage with your cousin, Julian Greville."

There was a little start, a little change of colour, a pausing in her work, but no exclamation.

"I wish you to understand, Susan, that it depends entirely on your own will. Your father wishes to fulfil his father's directions. I, too, shall rejoice if they can be accomplished consistently with your happiness; but there will be no force on your inclinations. What have you now to say?"

Susan remained for some minutes in deep thought. She raised her eyes at last, and then said in a voice which, soft as it was, was firm and decided, "Mamma, I will do all I can to love my cousin; if I find it impossible, you and papa must trust me that my will has not been wanting."

"And do you feel as if it would be possible?" inquired her mother, with some curiosity.

"I think it may," she replied, without raising her eyes.

Mrs. Greville slightly smiled.

Susan seemed to feel the smile and all that

it implied, for, with a heightened colour, she rose from her seat, and taking from her writing-desk a letter, gave it to her mother, as if in explanation of her feelings. It was a letter written in large boyish hand, and by its appearance had undergone considerable wear and tear.

Mrs. Greville glanced at it; it was thus:—

Florence, August 15.

MY DEAR COUSIN:

PAPA told me the other day that your brother was very ill. I am very sorry for it; and I am very sorry for you, because I am sure it must be very bad to see a person in pain. I went into a shop yesterday, and I saw some picture-books, and I asked papa if your brother would like them; and he said he would, and he said I might write to you, and tell you that they should go to England the very next person that goes. I hope they will get safe, and I hope you and your brother will like them; and I shall be very glad to hear that he is better. I was ill a month ago, but I am quite well now. I hope you are all

well. Give my love to my uncle and aunt, and tell them that my nurse says, Florence would do your brother good. I should like to see you.

“I am, my dear Cousin,

“Your very affectionate Cousin,

“JULIAN GREVILLE.”

Who does not know the value of a letter to a child? and this was the only letter Susan had ever received. The writer of it was, therefore, no stranger to her fancy. The picture-books, indeed, had never arrived; but what were picture books compared to a letter?

“It was kind of Julian,” Mrs. Greville said, with a faint smile, as she returned it,—“I had forgotten.”

She sate for some moments in deep thought; then approaching her daughter, she took a small miniature case from her bag.

“I have a picture of Julian, Susan, which your uncle wishes you to see. It represents him only as a child, but I understand that it is very like him still. If, however, in obedience to his wish, I allow you to see it,

you must remember that it is with no desire that you should fill your mind with idle dreams of romance. This marriage may very possibly never take place. Julian has consented to remain unmarried until he has seen you; but the same freedom of choice and refusal which is allowed to you, is allowed to him. He, too, may find it impossible to love you. There, Susan! you may take the picture for a few minutes."

Supposing Mr. Ralph Greville to be anxious to secure Susan's consent, he was judicious in allowing her to see the portrait of his son. It was but the picture of a child—a boy eight or nine years old—the black hair was falling round his face, and straying upon the open shirt collar; but there was something in the large expressive eyes, and in the melancholy and almost superhuman beauty of the features and countenance, which would have stirred the heart of the most tranquil.

When Susan raised her eyes, her cheek was crimson. "I think, mamma," she said, with a slight smile, "that it will be more likely

that my cousin should not love me, than that I should find it impossible to love him."

"It is very possible that he will not love you," said Mrs. Greville, in a grave calm voice, for she was troubled at her daughter's countenance. As she took back the miniature and turned away, her heart was visited with a slight pang of self-reproach for the work in which she had been engaged—but it was but for a moment. In her own family, cases of *mariages de convenances* had not been uncommon, and, as is often the case, had not been unhappy; and there was something in this calm arrangement of her daughter's future life which was naturally suited to the turn of her mind, and the ideas in which she had been educated.

CHAPTER IV.

Life is before ye—oh ! if ye could look
Into the secrets of that sealed book,
Strong as ye are in youth, and hope, and faith,
Ye should sink down and falter—‘ Give us death.’

MRS. BUTLER.

A YEAR after the date of the conversation related in the last chapter, Susan suffered the greatest affliction that could befall her,—the death of her mother. It is strange, but not the less true, that the cold and calm have a power of fixing affection which the soft and warm-hearted often seek for in vain. I speak of the outwardly cold—the really cold can neither feel nor inspire affection. Susan loved her father, but his weak and indolent character, though full of tenderness and indulgence for herself, could not inspire the

adoration with which she regarded her mother. I often wondered at the species of fascination which Mrs. Greville exercised over her and over her husband; and yet though I wondered, I, in common with all who approached her, felt the influence myself.

In her last illness, her naturally deep feelings burst through the barriers of coldness and formality which had hitherto restrained them; but while her tenderness gave a charm to those days, greater perhaps than had belonged to the days of health and strength, it could not fail to add to the bitterness of parting, in her daughter's desolate heart.

The fate of Susan had always occupied much of her thoughts; but in these days fear and anxiety began to enter into the gaze of affection with which her eyes rested upon her face. I believe that the pang of self-reproach, which she had at one moment felt, returned again and again in the silent hours of sickness.

“Susan,” she exclaimed one day, in a voice of deep tenderness, as she seized the hands with which her daughter was stooping to arrange

her pillows, “ how am I to leave you, my child?”

Though each had read in the eyes of the other that the fatal progress of the disease had been but too well observed, this was the first time that the idea of separation had been mentioned between them—perhaps to Susan, in spite of knowledge, the first time that it had been realized. Her cheek became crimson, then deadly pale; and, kneeling down by the side of her mother’s couch, she laid her head upon the hands which still enclosed her own.

“ Be calm, Susan,” said Mrs. Greville, gravely, dreading, from old experience, the effects of excitement upon her daughter’s feelings. “ There,” she continued, releasing her hands, “ sit down—sit down opposite to me. I wish to speak to you, and I cannot speak unless you command yourself.”

Her mother’s voice never failed in its effects on Susan’s mind. She rose from her kneeling posture as she was desired, the tears were driven back, the emotion that was overcoming her was stilled. But though the daughter became calm, the mother was agitated still.

"Susan," she began again, "I shrink from leaving you alone; who is to watch over you when I am gone?—who is to guard, to guide, to direct you?"

"You, mother, still," replied the soft, sad voice of her daughter.

The words appeared to cause a pang. Mrs. Greville sighed. "I sometimes fear, my child, that I have already guided you wrongly. This engagement. . . . It is of this I wish to speak to you. I sometimes fear that I have been wrong in allowing you to promise what you have done. It is now more than a year since your uncle acknowledged your father's letter, in which he had told him of your consent to our wishes. He then said that his son would shortly come to claim you. From that day to this the subject has not been mentioned by either one or the other."

"Don't fear for me, mamma," Susan replied; "for I do not fear for myself. I would not have anything otherwise than as it is."

"I do not wish to give you distrust, Susan, but it is better that you should look the future calmly in the face. It is better that you

should understand the peculiar difficulties of your position. You are in some sort tied to one in a foreign land; and you must guard your heart till he comes, however long he may delay. He may come at last, and *you* may love him only too well, while he. . . . Who is to watch for you my child, to act for you; who is to save you from sorrow, to guard you from insult?"

"Perhaps, mamma," said Susan, gently but steadily, "you will think me too bold, too confident, if I say what I feel; but I do not fear the future. I do feel that I am strong enough to bear the trials of life. I feel that I shall always be able to act for myself, and to suffer, too."

"You are confident," said her mother, with a faint smile; "but do not be too confident, Susan. You are calm now; you little know what you may feel—you do not know what suffering is."

"Do I not, mamma?" she exclaimed sadly. She hesitated, then continued in a steady voice, though while she spoke tears fell like rain from her eyes,—"What sorrow can ever be

equal to this—and yet, mamma, even this I feel that I can bear."

Mrs. Greville shook her head with a faint, sad smile, but she said no more; and, in spite of her consciousness that Susan little knew of what she spoke, the words of her daughter were effectual—and it was not the first time that they had been so, in calming and strengthening her heart.

Mrs. Greville died, and her loss was deeply felt in Susan's home. From that time, as if he had hitherto lived and thought only in the reflected light of his wife's intellect, Mr. Greville sank into a state of childishness. Perhaps Mrs. Greville only was aware how nearly a child he had been during his whole existence. There was nothing painful in his state, nothing approaching to idiotcy—he was full of kindness to Susan, and to all around him; happy, notwithstanding his loss, in his garden and his flowers; but so far as intellect was concerned, his powers were under those of an intelligent child of eight.

Susan had hitherto been a cipher in the

house. Suddenly she found herself a person of great importance, and invested with supreme authority. There was no agent at Keevor; old Mr. Greville had scorned assistance, and after the division of the property, it appeared to be needless. All affairs were managed by Mrs. Greville, assisted out of doors by an attached and respectable old bailiff, and within doors, in the management of the accounts, by myself. It was Mrs. Greville who heard complaints—who arranged the lettings of farms, the building and repairing of cottages—the cutting and planting, and other improvements of the property; and at her death she left a special charge that in all her employments Susan should succeed her. Certainly, the training of Susan's mind had adapted her to such occupations; and she rose at once, as strong minds ever do, to all the requirements of her position.

"I tell you what, Hannah," said the old bailiff to his wife, "Miss Greville is just such another as her mamma, only that her voice is softer, and her smile something sweeter. If I was to stop up my ears, and cover up my

eyes, bless you, I should think her mamma was alive again."

I gave her all the assistance, which Mrs. Greville's strongly expressed wish conscientiously allowed me to give, and she was not slow to avail herself of it; but still her time was much occupied, and often I felt saddened as I thought how dull and severe a life it was for one so young. The light of romance, the brightness of fancy, the gaiety of youth, shed but little sunshine on her path.

I cannot say, however, that she ever appeared to feel it dull. Her spirits were not high—I do not think in those days I ever heard her laugh—but neither can I remember that I ever saw her a prey to weariness, or to that sinking of the heart which I have seen in far happier lives. I suppose Ion is in the right—

There are a thousand joyous things in life
Which pass unheeded in a life of joy,
. . . . till breezy sorrow
Comes to ruffle it.

CHAPTER V.

A soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,
That did love Beauty only (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge, are three sisters,
And never can be sundered without tears.

TENNYSON.

What Trojan is that same that looks so heavy?

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

ANOTHER year had passed away.

Two young men were seated at dinner, in a room of one of the hotels at Dover. The rain was falling in torrents, and at the direction of one of the young men, the waiter, having stirred up a blazing fire, was closing the shutters and drawing the curtains to shut out the dirty, damp, dismal, lingering light of a rainy evening in May.

"Now, George," continued the same young man who had been issuing a variety of commands to the waiter, while his companion sat by in silence; "now, George, draw your chair near the fire, and confess that this is a little more comfortable. I suppose you are sighing over the rejected daylight, as my old nurse used to do; I can see her now shaking her head at me, because I *would* have the shutters shut whenever there was snow; but to my mind there is nothing on earth so dismal as acting summer on a day that January would be ashamed of, and that is what you stupid English are always doing."

"England is the only place for comfort," remarked his companion, who, though he had appeared indifferent about the fire, was now bending over, and scorching himself by the side of it.

"So you think; so all you proud English think. Virtue, courage, wealth, comfort—there is nothing that England is not famous for; but as to comfort, I deny it. The comforts of Englishmen are so tied and bound with rules and regulations that they might as well

be without them. Well do I remember my sufferings at my respected tutor's, the Rev. Nicholas Prim. In that truly English family, it was the custom to put out the fires on the 25th of March, and light them again on the 29th of September, and woe to him who presumed to shiver during the interval. There was I, George, fresh from the suns of Italy—I am sure you may be thankful that I was spared to you. I little thought during those two tedious years that I should have survived to shudder at them." He drew himself closer to the fire, and stirred up the blaze into a furnace.

The accent of the young man who had just spoken was English, but there was something in his manner which would have led you to think he was a foreigner. Englishmen rarely give to a subject more than its value. They talk of the weather with interest, because it is often a subject of real interest, but they do not discuss every trifle with the gestures and exclamations which on all subjects alike are common to foreigners. It was something of this peculiarity, a certain ex-

citement of manner in the commonest conversation which struck you as *un-English* in Julian Greville.

" You must confess, George," he continued, after a pause, " that England has given us a surly welcome. I came prepared to say, ' Dear earth, I do salute thee with my royal hand,' and this is the return it makes. All my beautiful feelings of *amor patria* with a damp chill hand are thrust back into my bosom, and I heartily wish myself at Florence again."

" Sunshine or rain, storm or cold, England is always welcome to me," said his companion, resolutely.

" That's very pretty, George; not, perhaps, exceedingly new, but expressed with much energy and feeling, and I congratulate you on the appearance of a poetical talent which I had never before suspected. You will turn out a mute inglorious Milton after all. However, seriously, though I cannot agree in the full force of your declaration, I will say, that for this once I come prepared to be pleased with England, and notwithstanding this most

dismal greeting, I am determined to be so still. I am tired of Italy, tired of beauty, tired of enjoyment, sick of myself. I want some new excitement, and I mean to find it here. I do feel it, already. I wish you were not such a dull fellow, George, for I feel up to anything to-night."

No remark was made, nor did he appear to expect one. He sate for some minutes in smiling thoughtfulness, while he tapped with the poker upon the bars of the grate in a manner which would have driven a sensitive person to Bedlam, but his companion was in a mood of thoughtfulness deeper than his own.

Suddenly he looked up. "And now, George!" he exclaimed, "what business do you suppose has brought me to England?"

George Vivian was a man of few words; he made a gesture which expressed whatever you pleased to imagine.

"What do you think of my having come to England in search of a wife—no, not in search, but actually to take a wife who is waiting for me—a wife I have never seen, scarcely heard of—a wife who may be an angel of beauty, or

a creature whose only use could be to frighten crows away, for anything I know of the matter? Well, George!"

His companion looked up and smiled.

"Why, what a wretch you are; you look as unmoved as if I had told you that I came all the way to England to have my hair cut. If my new wife is as English as you are, George, I shall lead a pretty life of it."

"I beg your pardon, Julian, but I am a bad deceiver. Your father told me of your engagement, or *half engagement*, two years ago, but he charged me not to mention it to you till you mentioned it to me. I have kept my promise."

"There's a long story saved, then, and I am not sorry for it," said Julian, as he stretched himself in his chair, and put his feet on the fender. "But I tell you what, George, I think we ought to figure in some future volume of moral essays, under the head of 'Unparalleled example of prudence and discretion,' or 'Rare instance of inviolable secrecy.' The annals of history could scarcely produce such another; and for once, I must

confess, that your virtue has been higher than mine, for I depended on your ignorance, and have reserved my communication like a child, for a bonne-bouche, while you must have been continually tempted to show me that you were perfectly acquainted with all my plans and intentions. There, George, is not that magnanimous; never complain of my vanity again. Well," he continued, after a moment's silence, "and what do you think of my prospects? Do you think that I was in the right to bind myself to this unknown wife? For after all I am bound, and I feel and own myself bound. Do you think you should have done as I have done?"

"No!" replied his companion, steadily.

"No!" As he spoke, Julian again started forward and seized the poker. He was one of those persons who are never still. The movements of the body are often the expression of the mind. "No, George! What, not if your father had implored you to consent to it, if he had asked a second promise almost in his last hours?"

"No," he repeated. "There is sometimes

a choice of duty, and for myself, I know too well that my likings are few, and my dislikes strong and many, for me to have allowed myself to involve the happiness of my whole life, and much more the happiness of another, in any such promise as you have made. It is less hazardous for you, Julian. You are more inclined to like and to love than I am; but even to you, my strong," he raised himself in his chair, "my earnest advice is, that you do not consider yourself bound. You know that it is not so in fact; your promise was merely conditional. You know that it is in your own power to set this engagement on another footing. For once, be wise; do not throw away rashly every chance of happiness, every hope of guidance in your future life."

Julian made no answer, but resumed his employment of fidgetting with the poker. George Vivian watched him for a moment, then continued with an earnestness of voice and manner which was unusual to him.

"I do not often think or speak on such subjects, but nothing can alter my opinion of the misery of a marriage without love; and

in your case, Julian, it is not only your happiness, but your welfare that depends upon it. You have lived with those you loved, and with those who love you, from your childhood till now; and unless your whole love, and your whole restless heart is given to your wife, there will be no peace and no safety for you. I promised your father to assist you and advise you—will you take my advice now?—will you promise me not to run rashly into an engagement which may entail misery upon you, and if upon you, then surely upon Miss Greville also."

"How I act, George, must depend very much upon circumstances. I don't yet quite know what is expected of me."

"No, Julian, do not let it depend on circumstances. For once let your actions depend not on the circumstances, and the temptations, and difficulties in which you are placed, but on your own clear judgment of what is best and right."

"Well, I promise you that if in very truth I find Miss Greville an odious, ill-tempered

scarecrow, I will scramble out of my difficulties, if there is a loophole left. But, George, I really enjoy the thoughts of my engagement; I look forward to the idea of a wife."

His companion sighed, but stooped again over the fire, and made no further remark.

Julian began again. "I am going to settle down into a thoroughly dull, heavy, steady character like yourself. Shall you not rejoice to see me in yellow gaiters and a broad-brimmed straw hat, acting the country gentleman, the respectable farmer, the domestic husband? Do you remember the drawing of my grandfather which hung in my father's study at Florence? I shall be just such another! When I was in a very good temper, my old nurse used to tell me, that if I would always be as good as I was on such a day, 'she did believe that I should grow up to be the very image of my grandpapa,' who was the object of her idolatry; and now you shall see her vision realized." And with a slight smile of vanity, which was, however, totally free

from conceit, he passed his fingers through the dark hair, which he wore rather longer than is common with Englishmen.

If personal vanity could ever be excusable, it might have been so in Julian Greville, for in figure and in feature he was absolutely faultless. It was such beauty as an artist would have loved to study, and which he might have used as a model for all the higher creations of his art, whether for a poet, a warrior, or an inspired saint. His raven hair curled slightly round a brow of that broad, open form, which is supposed to denote the poetic temperament. His eye, large and black as his hair, was at once piercing and melting; and his smile, now sweet and animated, now thoughtful and melancholy, had a charm peculiar to himself.

There was, however, a fault, not in the symmetry, but in the expression of his features, which in some degree detracted from the impression which he was calculated to make; and this more or less, according to the character of the observer. While in his figure there was something dignified and command-

ing, while the upper part of his face spoke of power and intellect, there was a defect in the lines of the mouth, a want of strength and energy, an expression of irresolution and vacillation, which gave a different character to his appearance. It came and went, in moments of excitement it even vanished altogether; but in general, even to a superficial observer, there was something in his countenance which mingled a feeling of painful interest with the admiration which he could not fail to inspire.

And this expression of his countenance was but the expression of his mind. As we read in the French fairy tale, it was as if the genius who presided at his birth had gifted him with every talent and every virtue, but withheld from him the power to use them. His mind was full of beauty, not of the beauty of art alone, but of moral beauty also. His ideal of perfection was high and noble. His heart swelled as he read or heard of lofty deeds, of heroic virtue, of self-conquest, of courage or magnanimity, but here he rested. A writer of the present day has said that "there are few practical errors of more im-

portance than confounding *wishes* with the *will*, which is the voice of the whole being;" and this was Julian's fatal mistake. He *wished* to be all that his imagination most brightly pictured, and yet when it came to action, he was feeble—to decision, he was uncertain. In temptation the bright ideal faded, and, carried away with the excitement of the moment, he was powerless. The beauty and refinement of his mind preserved him from much evil, but his life was a life of self-indulgence; and, looking back on the years that had passed, he could point to no wishes which had not been indulged, no desires which had not been gratified, either from a steadfast sacrifice to principle as regarded himself, or from charity to others.

In his intellectual nature the defect was the same. He had talent, he had genius. He could not sing a note, or play a chord, or write a fragment of verse, or scribble the merest scratch with his pencil, without displaying a power and vigour which mere application and perseverance may sigh for in vain, but he *did* nothing. It was perhaps of little

importance that he should persevere and perfect himself in any of these accomplishments; but as showing the tendency of his character, as illustrating, and even as assisting in confirming the moral defect of his nature, his want of application and energy, was all important.

Circumstances can never be made answerable for the errors into which we fall, but at the same time it must be allowed, that some circumstances are more favourable than others for the strengthening of the character in virtue and principle, and Julian was certainly unfortunate in the position in which he was placed. He inherited from his Italian mother his beauty and his genius, but her death, two years after the birth of her son, deprived him of a guide who had wisdom equal to her talents, and whose ardent imagination was swayed and directed by the purest principle. From the time of her death, he became the sole idol of his father, and, consequently, the master of the house. Indulged, petted, and cherished, he governed everything around him, except his own wayward will; and, perhaps, his danger was the greater, because, from the

amiableness of his disposition, the tenderness of his heart, and the refinement of his nature, his virtues were striking, while his faults were subtle and concealed.

When his son was eight or nine years old, Mr. Greville married the widow of an English gentleman, whom he met with abroad. In his choice, he was in some degree guided by anxiety for his child. Mrs. Vivian had two sons, five or six years older than Julian. These boys were at a public school in England, but Mr. Greville had seen them in Italy during the holidays, and had been struck by their mingled gaiety and manliness, steadiness and spirit. He hoped that the maternal care which had been so wisely exerted for them, might assist in guiding and controlling, without requiring severity on his part, the capricious whims and desires of his beautiful and idolized child. It is possible that the new Mrs. Greville had determined to watch over her step-son with the same wise and discriminating care with which she had watched over her own children; but the best resolutions occasionally yield to temptation, and the tempta-

tion of petting a beautiful and engaging child is, to those who are fond of children, no inconsiderable one. On the first day of her entering the house, the little boy approached her, twined his arms round her neck, and turning up his long dark lashes, as he fixed his eyes on her face, whispered, in mingled Italian and English, an inquiry, “whether she would be as kind to him as he was sure his own mamma would have been?” From that moment Mrs. Greville was as completely his slave as the rest of the household long had been.

Thus, unrestrained and uncorrected by education, Julian Greville, when grown to manhood, had but more fully developed the original fault of his childhood. He was in most points the same. There was the same openness of nature, the same kind-hearted, loving disposition, the same beauty and refinement of mind,—and with this, there was also the same wayward will, the same excitable, ungoverned imagination, the same want of strength and principle; while the restless consciousness of talents unused, gave at times

a new and painful irritation to his naturally sweet temper.

No contrast could be greater than that which existed, both in character and in appearance, between Julian and his brother, as he called him, although there was in fact no relationship between them,—George Vivian. The mind of the latter was as strong and resolute as that of Julian's was wayward and capricious. Julian excited more admiration by his talents, and perhaps commanded a greater degree of sympathy, but George Vivian was remarkable for that sound sense and clear judgment on which the mind reposes with perfect confidence, and which, though it goes under the name of “common sense,” is, of all qualities, the most uncommon, and the most inestimable in its value. Their different characters were strongly marked in their appearance. By the side of Julian, George, at first sight, would scarcely have excited attention, and yet, on a nearer acquaintance, he pleased you as much. He was fair, very English looking, very quiet, and extremely like a gentleman. Perhaps he interested the

more, because the gravity of his countenance scarcely appeared to be its natural expression. There was a life and spirit in his blue eye, which told a different tale, and contradicted alike the sombre clouded brow, and the common habits of his life. At the risk of tediousness, and although I fear that I have already dwelt at too great length on the character of Julian Greville, I must give a few words to George Vivian.

Naturally inclined rather to action than to study, his bodily feats at school had been more famous than his mental ones, and a passion for field sports had very early displayed itself. At seven or eight years old, he had announced his intention of being either a groom or a huntsman. When the impossibility of gratifying either of these wishes was pointed out to him, and he was invited to make a further choice of a profession, he declared in a very resolute tone that if he was not allowed to be one of those two things he did not care what became of him. This indifference gave way, before he was ten years old, to the usual boyish fancy of being

a soldier, and this desire remained unchanged till affection for his mother induced him to waive all his wishes, plans, and fancies, and to consent to go to college and endeavour to prepare himself for the life of a lawyer. Having once consented to the change, he devoted himself with characteristic resolution to the improvement of his mind, although, from his gay spirits and his averseness to all sedentary pursuits, the temptations to idleness were neither few nor inconsiderable. While still at college, an occurrence took place which in the same hour changed his prospects and blighted his life. From that time there was something which I might call inharmonious in his character and conduct.

“A man’s life,” says South, “is an appendix to his heart.” The most striking exception to the truth of this observation was in the life of George Vivian at the time when I first became acquainted with him. Naturally strong and active in mind and body, he yet led a dreamy, listless life, without any apparent object or occupation except in the

watchful care which he exercised over Julian. The strong practical sense which was remarkable in his judgments of the affairs of others, slept or appeared to sleep when brought to bear upon his own. He had a good property in a wild part of Wales, and the beauty of the place would have been alone sufficient to attract his interest and attention; but from the nature of the property and of the tenantry it had a claim upon him stronger than beauty, the claim, namely, that want and ignorance have upon the wealthy and the educated. But he never visited it, never bestowed upon it the smallest portion of his care. His affairs were managed by an agent, who spent his money lavishly, but whether for his own good or the good of the tenantry, George Vivian never inquired. He received from him the sums necessary for his few wants, answered any pressing letter, and that was all.

From the period of the event before alluded to, he left his native country, to which he was strongly attached, and wandered into all quarters of the globe in search, not of amusement,

but of distraction. He had been recalled from Egypt, after two or three years' wandering, to attend the deathbed of his mother.

Up to this time, though they had occasionally met both as boys and as young men, George Vivian and Julian Greville had been little together, but from this time they were inseparable. Julian clung to George, and George, weary and joyless himself, found some pleasure in the society of the wayward, impetuous, and affectionate youth. At Mr. Ralph Greville's request, who was in declining health, he took up his abode with them after his mother's death, and during a year and a half shared with Julian in the cares and watching which his health required. For six months more he remained with Julian to assist him in the arrangement of his affairs, which his father's long decline had left in some confusion; and now accompanied him to England, in the hope of guiding and advising him in the difficulties of the new position in which he was placed.

CHAPTER VI.

We've come to be married—where's the bride ?

THE HUNCHBACK.

ON his arrival in London, Julian wrote to Mr. Greville to propose a visit to Keevor; but he was nearer to his destined bride than he imagined, and an accident only prevented their meeting. Mr. Greville had travelled to London—a great journey for him—partly to consult a physician for himself and for Susan, although, as she vainly endeavoured to persuade him, they were both in good health, and partly to see a fine show of azalias, in a nursery-garden near London, of which he had read an account in the “Gardener’s Chronicle,” (the only newspaper which he cared to study). Having accomplished his own objects, he was

ready to accompany Susan wherever she chose to lead him; but at the end of a week he found himself tired of sights, tired of noise, and longing for the scent of his flowers, and the company of his gardener, at Keevor.

Julian's letter was forwarded to him from Keevor on the day before his intended return. He received it at breakfast. Although his daughter's marriage with his nephew was the sole object of his worldly care, he received the sudden announcement of his arrival in England, and of his intention to fulfil that object, with his usual calm insouciance of manner. He opened the letter, glanced at the signature, then laid it down, and proceeded to butter his toast and to finish his first cup of tea. When at length slowly and methodically he had mastered the contents of the letter, he looked at Susan.

“It is a pity we were not at Keevor, Susan; I have thought so every day. It is not a good thing to be away from home, and I felt sorry, yesterday, when Marshall wrote to say that the white rose-tree had budded.”

“Then why, papa, did you stay?—I hope

you did not think that I wished to stay in London."

"And if he did, Susan," said a stiff, thin, healthy-looking old maid of upwards of seventy, an aunt of Mr. Greville's, who had lately become an inmate of his family—"and if he did, Susan, he would have been in the right. It is not to be expected that you are to stay moping and poking at Keevor all the days of your life."

Mr. Greville looked at his daughter with a pained and wondering look.

"Aunt Janet is only joking, papa," said Susan, soothingly. "She knows that we never think of moping at Keevor. But what has happened there to annoy you?"

"Oh! it does not matter, Susan. I dare say it does not matter—only Julian wrote to say that he would come to Keevor, and we are not there. But I dare say it will not matter. I dare say he is still in England. He writes a pretty letter; you can see it."

"Blushing already! Susan?" remarked Aunt Janet, as she saw the crimson cheek, and startled expression with which Susan re-

ceived her father's communication—"a most promising sign for a lover. I shall take care that Mr. Julian Greville is duly informed of the fact."

I believe that Miss Janet Greville had many good qualities, but she had spent her life in endeavouring to conceal them. Meddlesome, impertinent, and irritable, her whole object appeared to be to make herself as disagreeable as a person with some acuteness, some malice, and a soured temper, can make herself. I have often heard it said, "Who *can* have told that story? who can possibly find pleasure in repeating disagreeable things, and making odious remarks?" and I have often felt inclined to answer, "Miss Janet Greville." She delighted in giving pain: not real pain, but in inflicting those little annoyances which, to sensitive people, are painful. To use a simile, she would not have stabbed her worst enemy with a dagger, but she would have found some satisfaction in sticking pins into the body of her victim. I must, however, say in her defence, that it was but a habit, and on the surface; *au fond*, I believe she had a good

heart. I say this from a sense of justice,—from no other feeling; there was no cordiality between Aunt Janet and me. She was a strange woman altogether. Though rich enough to live independently, she preferred to inflict her presence where it was not wanted. For five-and-twenty years she had established herself uninvited in the house of a widow sister, over whose low spirits and weak nerves she had tyrannized with iron tyranny. At her death, finding a short episode of solitude unpleasing, she wrote to her nephew, to propose a visit to Keevor. Mr. Greville, unconscious of all that was implied in the proposal, and, even had he been conscious, too weak and too hospitable to refuse, wrote her an answer in the kindest and most inviting terms; and to Keevor she came, a month or two after Mrs. Greville's death. She came, bringing with her all that is implied in the comprehensive term, "her things;" and once established, nothing but bodily force could have ejected her again.

A less acute observer than Miss Janet Greville would have been struck with the

expression of Susan's countenance on the announcement of Julian's arrival. It did not express alone the interest which all in her position must have felt; in her downcast face you might have read that hope and fear, that feeling rather than interest was agitating her heart. Since the day when first her eyes had been permitted to rest on the image of her cousin, that beautiful and melancholy countenance had unceasingly haunted her imagination; I will not say that while yet unseen Susan loved her cousin, but if I did say so, I should not be far from the truth. With him whose pictured image had such power to affect her, the hopes of her future life were inseparably bound up. It may, perhaps, seem to many that a passion so romantic was inconsistent with Susan's character; but it is a false idea to suppose that strong minds are necessarily matter-of-fact ones. A strong mind *may* be more romantic than any other, since its attachments may (not must) share in the strength of other parts of the character. It is but the folly of romance, the weak indulgence, the false sensibility, which a strong

mind necessarily rejects. Susan had naturally a vivid imagination, and the strictness of her education had rather deepened and concentrated than extinguished it. In the seclusion of the life she led, where there were none who could satisfy her pure taste and high ideal, this imagination had found a vent in the direction to which her mother had turned her thoughts: the mere idea of the possibility of her marriage with an unknown cousin would not have been sufficient to excite it; but the idea clothed in a tangible form, and such a form, had not only excited her imagination, it had taken entire possession of her heart.

Their meeting was prevented by an accident. On the day that Mr. Greville received his letter, Julian slipped down stairs, and severely sprained his ankle. George Vivian called on Mr. Greville, to tell him of the fall, and also of the necessary postponement of their visit to Keevor.

“Now, George, this is what I call wisdom,” said Julian Greville, as he stepped into the chaise that was to convey them to Keevor,

about three weeks after his accident; “ I wrote to Mr. Greville to say that we should arrive at six. Now, by my wise management, and by tearing myself out of bed an hour earlier than usual, we shall arrive at Keevor at four.”

“ And what is the object of the falsehood?” said plain matter-of-fact George Vivian.

“ What! why, who but you, George, would have to ask such a question? Do you think it nothing to escape the formal first introduction? Oh! I know you English well. If you *can* make a man look awkward, you will do it. But I am not going to submit to anything of the sort, and so I wisely arranged my present plan. You think I don’t know the manners and customs of this country of yours, but I have been here long enough to be aware that you have a sort of enjoyment in putting people out of countenance on such occasions as the present. I happened to be witness to a little matrimonial arrangement that took place at Mr. Prim’s, between Susannah Prim and the under-master. Oh! if you had but seen the endeavours of Mr. Prim and Mrs. Prim, and the friends of the Prims, to make the unfortu-

nate couple look like fools—the formal announcement, the healths that were drunk, the sly witticisms, &c., &c. Susannah bore it very well; women have wonderful pluck sometimes, but poor Parker! his unfortunate face did not recover the blushing of that day so long as I had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and I have no doubt it bears the traces still. No, George, such scenes are not lost upon me. I profit by experience."

"And so all Englishmen are like Mr. Prim? You are complimentary to me, I must say, Julian."

"Why, George, you are just such another, with less wit, perhaps, but even more formality. If I was now going down to Llandover to marry your daughter, I know exactly how it would be. I will describe the scene to you. I should arrive in my chaise and four punctually at five o'clock. You would be standing on the steps to receive me. *I* should jump out rather hastily, but *you* would come stately down and give me welcome. There would be a short inquiry after my health, and then you would say, 'Let me lead you to my daughter.'

I don't know how the leading would be conducted, whether we should proceed hand in hand or not, but lead would be the word, I know. Well, you would lead me through the entrance hall, by a long line of staring servants, into a dark, dreary, old-fashioned drawing-room, fitted up with carved oak and red damask, and there we should find Judith seated at her embroidery. You would precede me to the window, and you would say, 'Judith! . . . Why, George, you are perfectly devouring my romance, you shall not have another word; never, never, will you know how I shall greet your Judith."

"What a strange being you are, Julian," said George Vivian, fixing his eyes with some curiosity on his companion. "If I felt that on the events of this day the whole happiness of my life depended, as I fear you have determined to make yours depend, I could not joke as you do."

"Because your mind *is* a strange one, far stranger than mine. You allow one idea to absorb it wholly, and that must become oppres-

sive. I have a thousand ideas on one subject, and so none can weigh very heavily. I assure you, George, I am quite as much, perhaps more, occupied with wondering what I shall first say to Miss Greville, than I am with hopes or fears for my future life. Besides, you know, you like a quiet life, and so anxiety is tedious to you, but to me novelty and excitement are life and spirit, whatever they are caused by—pleasure or pain."

The journey to Keevor, which was a long one, was performed in the time allotted by Julian. It was just four o'clock when they turned abruptly down the hill, which overlooked the valley in which Keevor was situated. It lay before them in all the brightness of the sunshine, and the luxuriant verdure of June, and Julian surveyed the scene with the enraptured eye of an artist.

"This *is* beautiful, George! 'This *is* a valley worth fighting for!' as King William is said to have exclaimed on some occasion; it is as bright as Italy, and as fresh as Paradise."

An abrupt turning took them from the high

road into a shady lane, at the end of which an old ivy-covered gateway proclaimed that they were at their journey's end.

"I do believe we are at Keevor, George," cried Julian, as the postboys smacked their whips, and swept through the arch at full speed; "and I am quite unprepared,—I had no idea we were so near. This arrival is an awful thing! would it were done! I feel horribly nervous!—actually, there's the house. Ah, George! I wish you were in my position, and then you would not look so irritatingly demure. Here we are!" as, passing through another old archway, they stopped at the door of the house.

A servant stood in the entrance; no bells were rung, or notice given, and before Julian had time to think, the door of the long drawing-room was thrown open, and he was in Susan's presence.

She was alone, seated, as usual, in the recess of the window, endeavouring by the occupation of her fingers to steady her excited mind and restless expectation.

Julian stood for a moment irresolute; but

Susan, accustomed to act promptly and decidedly, put down her work-frame, came quietly forward, and held out her hand to each; then sitting down, half with words, and half with a movement, begged them to sit down also. So far she had acted without thought; but when she found herself seated opposite to Julian, whom she recognised at once from his strong likeness to the childish portrait on which her eyes had so often rested, something of consciousness returned, and showed itself not ungracefully in her downcast eyes, and in the slight nervous movement of her fingers.

Julian was the next to speak, and to make some apology for being earlier than the time he had mentioned; and in answer to this, Susan said she would call her father, and left the room.

"I like your Judith," said Julian, turning to George Vivian, with a smile, after some minutes consideration; "but didn't I tell you how much more pluck women have than men? I assure you I did not know what to say or do when I came into the room, and I humbly thank you for all the assistance you gave me.

I really beg you will exert yourself, George, for I feel so extremely bashful, that I have quite lost the use of my intellect."

They were interrupted by the return of Susan with old Mr. Greville. He went up to Julian with extreme kindness and cordiality.

" You are very welcome to Keevor, my dear Julian, for your own and for your poor father's sake. I am very happy to see you here: so is Susan, I am sure. You have taken me a little by surprise, but it is of no consequence; I dare say you could not help it. I should have been glad to have been ready to receive you, as I had intended; but you mentioned six o'clock—however, it is of no consequence, and I beg you will not make yourself uneasy at having surprised me."

Julian took the hint to excuse himself for his unpunctuality, which Mr. Greville again assured him was of no consequence, though he had been a little surprised at first. He then repeated his welcome to George Vivian, and then looked round for Susan.

" I must introduce you to my daughter Susan, Julian. I believe she was in the room

to receive you—she tells me she was; but, my dear Susan, don't go out of the way—I should like to see you welcome your cousin to Keevor."

Susan came forward shyly, but with a smile, and held out her hand again to Julian; then fearful, perhaps of some further remarks, she hastened to close the interview.

"I think you will be sorry to come in so early, papa. Won't you go back into the garden? Perhaps Mr. Greville and Mr. Vivian will like to take a walk, as it will be some time before dinner is ready."

"Yes, my dear Susan, I should be sorry to be in so early, and Marshall was a little disappointed at your fetching me away. I think I had better go back; and I shall be very glad if Julian and Mr. Vivian have any curiosity to see our flowers. But I hope they will make themselves quite at home here."

Julian followed Mr. Greville into the garden, and Susan returned to her work to think.

CHAPTER VII.

One

Not learned save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect—nay, but full of tender wants;
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Who looked all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread.

THE PRINCESS.

Few, none, find what they love, or could have loved,
Though accident, blind contact, and the strong
Necessity of loving have removed
Antipathies.

CHILDE HAROLD.

“ IF strong contrasts, as it is sometimes remarked, are peculiarly favourable to love, surely we may securely look to the fulfilment of our wishes here; for what is there in common between this quiet, retiring, simply-educated girl, and that brilliant, imaginative, and irresistible looking young man?”

Such was my soliloquy on the first evening of Julian Greville's arrival at Keevor; (for the occasion of his visit was well known; Mr. Greville, less discreet than his wife, having since her death made little secret of his plans and hopes for Susan,) and even on that first evening, I fancied that on one side the work of love was begun. And strange indeed it appeared to me, as I watched her kindling eyes and heightened colour, that it should be in Susan's tranquil nature that so sudden a passion should spring up. But the depths of human character are unfathomable. New circumstances call forth new feelings, new energies; and it is often the nearest and the dearest who see with most surprise the development of some unsuspected power, the apparition of some unexpected weakness, in a heart which they had supposed to be as clear to them as the day.

I can scarcely describe the interest with which I watched the party assembled at Keevor during those early days. To an observant mind, life is a continual romance; and even to an unobservant mind there *was* a romance

acted at that time. Every word that was spoken showed more plainly the wide gulf, formed by differences of tastes, feelings, and sympathies, which separated Julian from his cousin. Every moment revealed more clearly to my wondering eyes that Susan's heart was gone; I saw how she hung upon Julian's lips; how unconsciously, yet anxiously, she watched his countenance, to read its varying expressions of approbation or dislike; and it was not strange, therefore, that I should watch *him* on whom the fulfilment of our wishes depended, endeavouring myself to read in his glances, and to gather from his words, whether the contrast between them was of such a nature as to awaken, or to prevent the awakening of love.

The contrast was amusingly shown on the very first morning. Mr. Greville, in the kindness of his heart, and in the excess of his hospitality, was extremely anxious for the amusement of his guests; and several times during breakfast he inquired of Julian, "Well, my dear Julian, what are your plans for the day?" Receiving, as was natural, somewhat

undecided answers, for few people (and Julian least of any) wish to be bound at breakfast time to any particular course of amusement for the day, he exercised his own intellectual powers upon the subject, and as he left the breakfast table he turned round, and said—

“ My dear Susan, you must think of something that will amuse Julian and his young friend. I was very happy to show them my flowers last night, but a change is sometimes pleasant, and——”

“ Pray do not think of our amusement,” Julian said, interrupting him hastily. “ We shall not have explored all the beauties of Keevor for many days, and I shall not be quite easy till I have been again to the top of the hill to feast my eyes on your beautiful valley.”

“ The sun is too hot for such a walk, my dear Julian; the sun is hot and the hill is steep; I have not walked up it this twenty years—you shall have the carriage some day; but I was thinking, Susan, that you would be anxious to show Julian your farm. There is

a nice shady walk that way, and I dare say he is as fond as you are of poultry and cattle. Stephen was telling me yesterday that you have some very pretty little pigs."

In some curiosity I turned to examine Julian's countenance; I felt instinctively that the picture presented by Mr. Greville's words would be distasteful to his fastidious ideas. I was right.

"Has Miss Greville a farm?" he asked, fixing his eyes upon her with a look of surprise, and there was something of displeasure and contempt mingling with their astonishment. Susan was silent, but Aunt Janet was not slow to answer.

"A farm! indeed she has. She is the most famous farmer in all the country. What are your strong points, Susan? Pigs or poultry, cows or butter, turnips or mangel-wurzel; or are you so famous for all that you disclaim praise for any one in particular?"

Susan blushed, and a pause followed this speech; it was broken by George Vivian, who laid down the newspaper he was studying, and came towards her.

"I'm sorry to tell you, Miss Greville, that Julian is perfectly ignorant of all such matters. He does not know a pig from a cow; but it is time that he should lose what, if he had been born in London, we should call cockney notions and habits, and the sooner his education begins the better. Pray let us see your farm without delay."

Susan smiled, and moved towards the window that led into the garden; but I saw that the effect of Julian's silence was to cause a timidity and embarrassment which was very unusual to her gentle, self-possessed manner. But this timidity, this yielding to the influence of another, this loss, if I may so express it, of *personality*, is one of the surest unconscious signs of the dawning of a love which is to take a strong hold upon the heart.

At the window she turned, and with rather an anxious look appealed to Miss Janet Greville, who still sate at the breakfast table. "Are you ready, Aunt Janet; won't you come with us?"

"My dear Susan, have you quite lost your memory?" she replied, sharply. "I mentioned

when I first came down that I was suffering from a very severe sore throat. I did not sleep a wink all night; and I think my voice might have reminded you of the fact, even if it was of too little importance otherwise to be remembered."

"I am very sorry, Aunt Janet. I did forget. Pray don't think of coming." She hesitated, then glanced at me; then, as if ashamed of her irresolution, went into the garden without making any further request. I took no notice of her glance. I was pained, I confess, to see her so unlike herself.

The farm was not far from the house; it was prettily situated, and kept with great order and neatness, but there was no ideal beauty about it, and Julian looked round with an air of indifference. An old woman came towards her visitors, and curtseyed her good morning, while she smoothed her white apron with her hands. Susan answered her kindly, saying they were come to visit the farm; as she spoke, she looked at Julian. She hoped he would have said something, either in kindness to the old woman, or by way of expressing

some slight interest in the object of their visit; but he remained silent. He was thinking; and consideration for the feelings of others was not in his nature.

To break a silence which was visibly awkward to Susan, George Vivian again put himself forward; asked a few simple questions, and was immediately led away by the old woman to see the various beauties of the farm.

Susan remained with Julian at the entrance to the farm-yard, and was silently battling with a new and painful feeling of scorn towards all her usual employments, when he addressed her.

“These, then,” he said, looking round him with a slight inquiring smile, “these are the occupations which you prefer to more intellectual pursuits?”

“No, not prefer;” said Susan, hastily.

“I think you told me last night that you played only a little, that you sang not at all, and drew not at all. And yet Miss Greville has a farm, and is even *famous* for her farming.” He spoke playfully, but it was a satirical playfulness.

"That was only Aunt Janet's way of speaking," she replied, with a blush.

"And what is your way of speaking—what is your account?" He fixed his eyes upon her, smilingly and inquiringly. I believe he was not displeased at the embarrassment his looks very evidently caused her.

Susan struggled to subdue the anxiety which she felt to justify herself in his eyes. The anxiety, perhaps, was not subdued, but the appearance of it was. Very simply and quietly she explained the case.

"There has always been a farm at Keevor; my grandfather was very proud of it, and my father, though he cannot attend to it, is equally so. You know, if there was no interest shown in it, we could not expect that things would go on well; and so, though of course I can do but little, I do try to understand and to be interested in it."

Still with his eyes fixed upon her, Julian persisted in his objections. "I don't see how the slight interest which it may be necessary for you to show for these agricultural concerns can interfere with the cultivation of more

agreeable and more suitable pursuits. I suppose a daily visit of a few minutes would be a quite sufficient encouragement, if you pleased to make it so. I am very much afraid that you prefer the cackling of those geese to the sweet sounds of harmony."

Susan smiled and shook her head; but she was recovering from her first fit of embarrassment, and on his asking for some account of her mode of life, she described it in a few simple words.

" You spend your time, then," interrupted Julian, " over dry accounts and musty parchments; in listening to interesting details about cattle, and, as Aunt Janet informed me, in ordering dinner."

Susan offered no contradiction, for she could not well do so; and till now her life had never seemed dull or trifling in her eyes. Now, however, as Julian recounted her occupations in tones bordering upon contempt, it assumed a different appearance, and though she remained silent, she stood with downcast eyes and with a blush of shame upon her cheek.

Julian looked at her for a short time in

thoughtful silence. The result of his contemplations was to say, with interest in his voice and with a smile upon his countenance—

“At any rate, I see that, whatever your wishes may be, you are willing to sacrifice them to what you consider to be your duty. I suppose I ought to feel that this is better than accomplishments.”

Susan blushed deeper with pleasure than she had done with embarrassment; but his observation was not a true one, and she hastened to say so. “No, indeed, you must not think that I have been dissatisfied with what I have had to do. If my wishes to improve myself in music and drawing and such things had been very strong, I have no doubt I should have found time to do it; but when I have time to spare I like to read, and when I have time to be idle I like to work and to be quiet. I must not have you think that there is any sacrifice in what I do.”

“But I choose to think there is,” he replied, with the playful, wilful look of an old acquaintance.

They were soon joined by George Vivian

and his companion, and, with a slight bow in reply to the old woman's low curtsey, Julian turned to go. As they moved on, Mrs. Roberts beckoned to Susan to return.

"Which of them two young gentlemen be the young master, Miss Greville?"

"The tall one, Hannah. Didn't you know him?"

"I guessed as much," replied the old woman; "and that other young gentleman, he did tell me as much,—for I made so bold as to ask him if he was the young master; but, heart alive, Miss Greville, *he* be'nt a bit like a Greville."

"He is handsomer than a Greville, don't you think so, Hannah?" said Susan, with a smile and something like a sigh.

"Oh, Miss Susan, for shame! I never thought to hear you say the like of that. Your grandpapa, the late Mr. Greville as was," and she curtseyed as she pronounced his name, "was as fine a looking gentleman as ever I'd wish to see,—so tall and so fine, and a bit stout, too. That be a fine young gentleman, but he be'nt like a Greville, and so I shall

tell my Stephen. And who may the other be, Miss Susan, with the fair hair and the sweet blue eye?"

Susan satisfied her.

"He *be* a pleasant spoken young gentleman," she said, warmly; "and knowledgable, too, and a fine young man; and my heart warmed to him at the first, for I thought *he* was the Greville; but there be fine young men that beant Grevilles, I do suppose."

"I suppose so," Susan said, smiling; "but Hannah, we shall be offended if you let Mr. Vivian run away with all your praise."

"Oh, Miss Susan!" exclaimed the old woman, suddenly seized with a fit of remorse, "that other young gentleman, the young master, as they calls him, he *be* amost too fine for me to praise. He *be* a young man, indeed. And if he *be* a bit distant, why it becomes him, my dear, so grand and so stately."

"I don't think he is distant, Hannah," said Susan, anxiously; "but you know he has lived abroad all his life, and he is not accustomed to the country as Mr. Vivian is."

"Indeed, indeed!" with an expression of awe in her countenance, "and he be come a thousand miles or more I make no doubt. Lawk! Miss Greville, Keevor can't be nothink but a dull place to such as he."

Susan smiled and sighed, and followed her guests to the house.

The old woman smoothed her apron, looked after them, and shook her head. "He be a fine young man, no doubt," she summed up; "wonderful fine; but he ben't a bit like a Greville *as yet*; and so I shall tell my Stephen."

CHAPTER VIII.

Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her?—that but seeing you should love her? and loving, woo?

AS YOU LIKE IT.

WE were not long in doubt as to the nature of Julian's intentions with regard to his cousin.

As we all walked home from the morning service on the Sunday after the new arrivals at Keevor, George Vivian made some remarks more warmly than was usual to him, in admiration of the parish church, and of the performance of the service.

Susan looked pleased, and Mr. Greville said, "Susan teaches those poor little children to sing, and she worked that new altar cloth," in a tone which evidently implied that such

being the case, it was no wonder that the church should be admired.

"Is this another of your employments, Susan?" was Julian's smiling remark. After one day's acquaintance he had called her by her name. "I like this better than some other employments I could name; indeed, I think I could myself be an instructor 'in harmony, in heavenly harmony.'"

"I was very happy to find myself in a quiet country church again," said George Vivian. "How did you feel, Julian?"

"Very happy to be at Keevor," he replied, with, I fancied an endeavour to catch Susan's eye; "but as to your quiet country church, you must know very well that I shall disagree. Our Protestant service strikes me as being very tame and common-place after the services which I have attended abroad."

"The Roman-catholic service?" inquired Susan.

"Yes," he said; "I am a very good Protestant, I assure you; but when I want to feel religious, then I go into a Catholic church. Oh! Susan, I wish you could see

some of the foreign churches, and hear the music. . . . Our doctrines are all very good; and as I tell you I am a true Protestant, but I must own that the Catholics have hit on the right way to make men religious."

"I knew we should disagree," said George Vivian. "Now to me there is something in the simplicity and quietness of Keevor church far more solemn, than the finest or the most impressive service I attended with you at Rome. Something that separates one much more entirely from common life and common cares."

"You talk nonsense, George. You are so prejudiced in favour of England, that you will allow nothing to be good or beautiful elsewhere. I wish Susan could be the judge; I wish you could go abroad, Susan, and see if I am not right in saying, that the Catholic service is more favourable to religion than our cold English one. I assure you," he continued, laughing slightly as he spoke, "that when I have sometimes stood to listen, hearing the voices rise and fall with their wonderful harmony, I have felt actually inspired; raised

out of myself; capable of any degree of virtue; ready to be a Saint or a Martyr."

"And as soon as the voices died away, you found yourself a most uninspired mortal, I will venture to say," said Aunt Janet, scoffingly.

Julian coloured, perhaps at the truth of the observation.

"But surely, Aunt Janet," said Susan, warmly, "it is good to have such feelings, even if it is only for a time?"

"Don't be too sure of that, Susan. For my part, I would not give one brass farthing for all the good feelings in the world."

"Perhaps you would prefer bad ones," said Julian, playfully.

"Perhaps I should, Mr. Julian; and I should not be far wrong if I did. I have seen more bad feelings conquered, than I have seen your fine raptures rise into virtue."

"This is a very curious little plant," remarked Mr. Greville, totally unconscious that he broke in upon any subject of conversation, as he pointed with his stick to a small red

flower, that grew among the stones by the side of the road. “It is called the ‘Shepherd’s Clock,’ Julian, because it shuts up its leaves exactly at midday.”

“Then it is a useful little plant, small as it is,” said Julian, kindly; and he stooped and picked it from the ground. “I wonder if any poet has ever apostrophised it. It is a subject I should like to enlarge upon; great powers and little show.” And this time I was sure that his eyes glanced with meaning and affection at Susan.

During the rest of the walk home, he remained at Mr. Greville’s side, discussing with him the nature of various herbs and flowers; and I saw the cheek of the affectionate daughter glow with pleasure, as she watched his attentions to her father.

When we reached the garden, Mr. Greville took Julian into the conservatory, to exhibit a yellow rosebud which he had discovered in the course of his early morning inspection of his treasures, and we all followed to see what could be seen.

“See, Julian, here it is,” began Mr. Greville,

speaking in the half-childish, half-poetical way in which he spoke of his flowers. “ How gracefully it bends, how delicate the colour; but it has lost something of its beauty since the morning. It is always so; these frail things come to touch our hearts, and haste away before we can show them our love.”

Julian expressed his admiration of the rose-bud, but while he was examining it, his eye was caught by a foreign plant which stood beside it;—a flower of less beauty, but greater rarity, and which, perhaps, from some association, was more attractive to him. He touched it, and in a voice of far greater admiration, exclaimed,—“ This is beautiful! look, Susan.”

“ Do you like everything foreign best?” Susan asked, I thought reproachfully.

He turned his eyes full upon her. “ No, Susan, not *everything*;” and he gave her such a look, and such a smile, as made Susan bend her head over the flower, and drew from Aunt Janet the remark, — “ Not everything, of course, my dear Susan. How can you ask such a foolish question?”

As Julian spoke, my eyes unconsciously met those of George Vivian. I saw we both looked upon his words as decisive ; but the expression of our countenances was different. His was troubled and anxious ; mine, I am well aware, was relieved and satisfied. Julian had been but three days at Keevor, but in those days he had shown such charm of manner, such sweetness of disposition, such sense and spirit and gaiety of conversation, that I had yielded to the sunshine of his influence, and wondered no more that Susan had suffered her fancy to be dazzled, and her heart to be touched. Could I then be otherwise than pleased at the certainty which I now felt that Susan's happiness would be accomplished ; and yet George Vivian was in the right. Even to the soberest among us, three days acquaintance would be but a precarious foundation on which to build the happiness of two young lives, and how much more precarious, then, in the case of the wayward and excitable Julian Greville !

“ Where's Susan ? ” said Julian, looking into the drawing-room early one morning, a day or

two after the last conversation. “I have been writing some verses to the ‘Shepherd’s Clock,’ and I want to read them to her.”

“What, you’re a poet! are you, Mr. Julian?” said Aunt Janet, who was sitting alone, making herself mistress of the contents of the newspapers.

“Sometimes, when I have a fit object to inspire me. Would you like me to indite some verses to you, Aunt Janet?”

“No, thank you, I have no liking for trash.”

“You are very polite,” said Julian, laughing; from the first moment he had appeared to enjoy Aunt Janet’s character. “I won’t trouble you, then, with any of my soft strains. But where’s Susan? can you tell me? where can I find her?”

“You will find her in the village, if you please to go and look for her there.”

“Hang the village!” he said, hastily; “what is she doing there?”

“As usual, I suppose, gossiping with old women, and petting dirty children.”

Julian looked put out, curled his lip with

an expression of disgust, slammed the door with some violence, and came and sat down by Aunt Janet.

“ It appears to me, Aunt Janet, that Susan has been very strangely brought up.”

“ Indeed !” she replied drily.

“ Yes, indeed !” he said, laughing again ; “ how very provoking you are. But don’t you think so too ?”

“ It appears to me, on the contrary, that she has been extremely well brought up, if she did but know how to make a good use of her education. She can read and write and keep accounts, order a good dinner, and speak when she is spoken to.”

“ A most estimable list of accomplishments, Aunt Janet, certainly.

‘ Come when you’re called,
Do as you’re bid,
Shut the door after you,
And you’ll never be chid.’

“ But after all, this is apt to be a little dull and dry ; and for myself I confess that I should prefer a little chiding to such saint-like goodness as the poem describes.”

“ Susan is a great deal better than you will ever be, Mr. Julian.”

“ True, Aunt Janet, most true; no one can be more aware of the fact than I am myself; and don’t suppose,” he continued, seriously, “ that I object to her goodness, or meant to say Susan was dull or dry. She is enough to make me forget all my maxims, all my wishes, and to adorn what I most dislike. But still there are some things which I do dislike—this visiting, for instance. I admire a *sœur de la charité*, no one can admire them more, but let it be a *sœur de la charité*. A Lady Bountiful, a charitable Dorcas!—I assure you, Aunt Janet, a cold shudder runs through my frame when I think of such a character.”

“ What stuff you talk, Mr. Julian,” said Aunt Janet, angrily; not that she approved of Susan’s doings, but she loved to contradict.

“ No stuff at all, Aunt Janet. I once lived in the house with a charitable Dorcas, and I creep at the remembrance still. I will describe her to you. Her name was Miss Prim, and truly prim she was. She was always dressed in a dark, woe-begone, coloured stuff gown,

something between a drab and a fawn colour, which clung round her legs like a bathing-gown, and a black collar, which she wore to save washing. She always appeared in the house with a small flannel petticoat in her hand, and always out of doors with a covered basket on her arm; and she never opened her lips except to say something on the subject of ‘my poor pensioners,’ or ‘my interesting little scholars.’” He stopped and laughed at the vision which he had conjured up to his fancy, then added, as if it was a truth which had but just struck him—“Susan, however, never could be like *her*.¹”

“I suppose, Mr. Julian, you mean to marry Susan?” said Miss Janet, looking full in his face.

Julian opened his eyes, coloured slightly, then burst into a violent fit of laughing. She looked at him with unfeigned astonishment, on which he recovered himself, and apologized. “I beg your pardon, Aunt Janet, but you really do ask unwarrantable questions. How can I answer you?”

“I see no difficulty in the matter—it de-

pends on yourself; you must see that Susan is quite ready to have you."

He coloured again; the speech was offensive to him in many ways, and he got up in some indignation, but as he got up, the door opened, and Susan appeared.

"Come in, Susan," cried Aunt Janet; "we were just talking of you. Mr. Julian does not approve of these village doings of yours."

"Was there ever such a woman?" said Julian to himself, but he made no denial, and stood in the window to listen to what passed. Whatever unpleasant sensations the expression of "Susan being quite ready to have him" had excited, they faded at once at her appearance. She blushed at Aunt Janet's speech, but did not notice it, and coming steadily forward, gave unhesitatingly her errand.

It was from a person in the village who was ill, and anxious to see Miss Janet Greville. From her love of managing, Aunt Janet had constituted herself physician, and I cannot deny that her prescriptions had been attended with much success.

"What's the matter with her?" asked Miss Janet, sharply.

"I don't know."

"Then I have not the least doubt but it is the small-pox, and I'm quite ashamed of you, Susan, for running into infection in this way. I can assure you, you have not so much beauty that you can afford to lose a part of it."

"I assure you it is not the small-pox, Aunt Janet," she said, smiling; "you know I always am very careful, because papa is frightened."

"Well, I suppose I must go, though I am sure I don't feel at all up to such a walk in this hot sun. You had better ask me to be cook at once. I wish the poor people would learn not to be ill."

"I dare say they wish it too, Aunt Janet," said Julian, bending forward from where he stood.

"Wait for me here, Susan, I shan't be long." She walked to the door, then looked back, and added—"And ask Mr. Julian what he thinks of you, for he has been talking a proper lot of nonsense."

Susan again blushed slightly at the remark, but turned immediately to Julian, and said,

with a smile, “How do you like Aunt Janet, Mr. Greville?”

The charm of Susan’s presence, with the unconscious simplicity of her manner, had made a reaction in Julian’s mind, from the lowering thoughts which Aunt Janet’s remarks and his own momentary comparison with Miss Prim had excited; and yielding to the impulse of the moment, and to the tenderer thoughts which the feeling of the injustice which had been done to her raised in his affectionate nature, he came towards her.

“I like her very much, Susan; I like everything at Keevor except one thing; and shall I tell you what that is?” He paused; then said with a playful, but emphatic tone, “You call me Mr. Greville, and I call you Susan.” He stopped, smiled, and looked in her face with such a look as he had given her on the Sunday. She blushed deeply and turned away her head. There had been more of playfulness than of feeling in his manner until now, but catching hold of her hand, he felt that it trembled, and in her half averted countenance he read a tale of feeling so far

deeper than he had expected to excite, that pleased, surprised, carried away, he went on in a voice of real and deep tenderness. "Have I not reason to complain, Susan? Ought I not to be called Julian by those *I love?*"

The door opened, and Aunt Janet looked in. I don't know if it was her choice, it certainly was her fate always to appear at inopportune moments. Her quick eye was immediately conscious of the state of the case, though Susan hastily withdrew her hand, and went forward to meet her; and giving a provoking nod with her head, and closing the door before Susan could reach it, she called loudly, "Pray don't let me interrupt your conference, Susan. I am going down the passage to put on my boots."

Susan stood irresolute. Julian could be smiling, and at his ease; but to her this moment was the fulfilment of nights and days of thought and feeling; and fluttered with expectation, and trembling beneath the weight of unwonted emotion, her self-possession was gone. Julian called her back.

" You must come back, Susan. I want to

speak to you. Let her wait." He took hold of her hand again. "Why, Susan, how you tremble," he said, tenderly; "are you afraid of me?—you must not be afraid! It is for me to be afraid of you. I have so much to tell you; so much to ask you; so much to tell you of myself"

"I just looked in again, Susan," cried Aunt Janet, popping her head into the room, "to say that I hope you will not keep me long. My throat is not quite well, and the draught in the passage is particularly bad for it, that's all," and she closed the door.

Julian burst out laughing. "Go along, Susan," he said; "that woman is enough to drive all sentiment out of the world. Go along, now; and when you come back," he added, rather with the authority of a husband than the entreaty of a lover, "come to me in the garden, and we will not be interrupted."

CHAPTER IX.

To soothe thy sickness, watch thy health,
Partake, but never waste thy wealth,
Or stand with smiles unmurmuring by,
And lighten half thy poverty.
Do all but close thy dying eye,
For that I could not live to try;
To these alone my thoughts aspire,
More can I do, or thou require?

BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

Passions are likened best to floods and streams,
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb.

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

WHEN Susan returned from the village, she found Julian walking in deep thought up and down on the broad gravel-walk before the house. She sat down on a garden-seat, and, trembling and agitated, waited until he should observe her. It was some time before he discovered her; when he did so he called her

hastily, and she went forward to meet him. He was not like the same person from whom she had parted an hour before; then, his countenance had been all playfulness and gaiety, now it was dark and troubled. His hair was in disorder, his brows were knit and bent; and his eyes, their laughing light extinguished, had an expression of gloom and melancholy.

Susan had never seen him thus before, but it was a transformation by no means uncommon to Julian, it was a transformation which thought always produced upon him. So long as he lived in the present moment, and in the excitement of the moment, he was all lightness and gaiety; but if once he looked upon the mind within, if once he meditated upon himself, the lightness of his nature was gone. Restless, troubled and ungoverned, he became terrified at the picture of his own heart. The few words he had that morning spoken had decided his destiny, and what all George Vivian's warnings and remonstrances had failed to do those few words had done; they had awakened his mind to consideration on

the step he had taken ; they had opened his eyes to the responsibilities he had invited ; they had roused his imagination to dwell on the hopes and fears, the clouds and sunshine of his future life. It is often thus. The words of others are without us, and however forcible they be, may pass over us as but the sound of “a lovely song,” and make no impression, but our own words are from within, and once spoken, they arouse the conscience, though perhaps when they have set their seal, too late.

It was not that Julian repented of the step he had taken ; but what he had done lightly now weighed heavily ; and the very act of thinking, of pondering upon his actions, had tossed and disordered his mind, and had brought on one of the gloomy and desponding fits to which an excitable nature is at all times subject.

“ Not here, Susan, not here,” he said, as he met her. “ I cannot talk to you here. Let us go to the wood.”

She walked by his side in silence. *His* thoughts were of himself—*hers* were all of

him. In one moment, in the one glance at that troubled countenance, she had passed at once and for ever from girlish shyness, from trembling love, from youthful hopes, from romantic dreams, to the deep, strong, unselfish devotion which characterizes the love of a wife or a mother.

They reached the wood. He drew her hand within his arm and held it there; then began—

“ Susan, I hate this engagement. I wish it had never been; I love you, I must always have loved you; but for myself, I cannot bear to think that love is not freely given; that duty, that love for your father commands it. I need a strong love, Susan; I wish to be loved for myself alone; tell me, tell me truly, is your love free; if there had been no engagement should you have loved me still?”

He looked anxiously in her face; and she hastened to answer him.

“ I think I must if I had *dared*.” It was the full expression of what she felt.

“ Dared, Susan! Ah! you do not know me.” He pressed her hand, held it faster,

then went on in a tone of great feeling. "It was needful that I should ask you if you truly loved me; for a light love, a light fancy, will not do for me. It will be a hard task and a heavy one to be my wife, and not all happiness. You have not seen me, you have not known me as I am. I am as variable"—he stopped and smiled; even then, though strongly and deeply moved, a poetical quotation was natural to him—"as variable as the shade by the light quivering aspen made.' Never at rest, never at peace; always excited, sometimes sad and dreary, as I feel now. And worse than this; there have been moments when I have felt; moments so dark and despairing that there has been to me no truth on earth, no faith in Heaven. Do not shrink from me, Susan. You must know all, you must be ready to bear all. I need to be loved; I need to have one who will cheer me, who will cling to me; who, even if my restless, wandering heart strays from perfect right and perfect truth, will still bear with me. Will you, Susan, can you be such a one to me? Will you never, never forsake me?"

"I will never, never forsake you," was the soft, firm, earnest voice by his side.

He started as he heard her—started at the depth of devotion expressed in the voice that spoke. He had told her that he loved her, but all his thoughts, all his feelings, all his words had been of himself. Not once had he recalled the vow which *he* must make—the promise to love *her*, to cherish *her* until death should them part.

"Do you, indeed, so love me, Susan?" he said, bending down to look in her face. "Is it possible that you can already so love me?"

As Julian spoke, a mist fell from Susan's eyes. Her position stood before her in its clear colours. The force of the engagement, Julian's hasty decision, the rapid growth of her own love. Till now his words and her own ready response had seemed but natural in her eyes. She was not easily excited or carried away: her life had been too early saddened for that; but the very fact that excitement was unusual to her, had made her more completely under its influence now. The fascination that hung upon all that Julian said and did; the

attention of which she was now, for the first time, the object; the new life that was opening upon her; all the interest of her position, had conspired to blind her, and to place her under the influence of that illusion and delusion that excitement brings. She, prone as she was to deep thought, had not considered the difficulties or the strangenesses of her situation.

But now her eyes were opened. “Is it possible that you *already* love me?” The words fell heavily on her mind, not for her own sake, but for Julian’s. She perhaps had been easily won; but for her there was no more doubt or fear; easily it might have been, but won she was, wholly and for ever; but *he—did he love her?*

“I feel that you may doubt me,” she said, looking up with a deep blush, but firmly and steadily; “I feel that you may, perhaps, despise a heart so easily won. But these thoughts and feelings are not new to me. They are but the fulfilment of the hopes of two long years. And if I have been easily won,” she added, with a touching smile, and

unconsciously expressing something of Juliet's sentiment, "believe me I shall not be easily shaken."

"I know it, Susan," he said, tenderly—and her manner would indeed have given the most doubting confidence—"I feel it now; you love me, and you will bless me."

"But, Julian," she said, stopping in her walk, and looking gravely at him, while she disengaged her hand from his arm, "Are *you* sure of yourself; are *you* free? If it is strange that I should love you, is it not stranger that you should love me—you, who have seen the brightness of the world, while I have so little, so very little, to win your love."

"So little, Susan," he cried, earnestly; "so little—you who are loved, and must be loved, by all who come near you!"

"But as your wife, Julian. It is not a light thing to be bound together for life. Consider before it is too late. You said you hated this engagement. Let there be none; you know there is none if your will is not free. You can know me but little as yet. . . ."

"Stop, Susan," he said, "if you do not

wish to make me miserable. You have said you loved me,—why will you now try to cast me away? Do I not know you? Do I not know that you are an angel? Do I not hear your voice fall like music? Do I not feel that it blesses me as my mother's voice blest me once."

And so they were betrothed to each other.

They parted, and Susan sought her father; not as she might have done that morning, blushingly, tremblingly, to tell of happy plighted love, but gravely, and even sadly.

She found him engaged in arranging some flowers for a stand in his sitting room. His whole mind was in his occupation, and she waited till the arrangement was completed, then she said,—

"I am come to tell you, papa, what I think will make you happy. I am to be Julian's wife."

Mr. Greville raised his head from the flower over which he was bending, and a look of unwonted pleasure, and a gleam of unusual intelligence, lit up his eye.

"God bless you, Susan!" he said, fondly

taking her hand; "you ever have, you ever will bless me. Now," and there was something like a sigh of relief, which showed that a painful load had rested on his apparently inanimate heart, "I think my father will forgive me."

The gleam of intelligence faded, and turning to his flowers, he broke off two rosebuds, which he put, with a childish smile, into Susan's hand.

In recovered spirits, in violent excitement, Julian sought George Vivian. He might well say that he was "variable as the shade," for already all traces of the mood of the past hour had disappeared, dark as the fit had been during its duration. He found him in a small library which had been given up to their use. He was sitting with a book before him, but he was not reading. Thought, heavy thought, was more usual to him than occupation.

"Well, George, it is all settled," Julian began; "I've done the deed, and Susan is to be my wife."

George Vivian looked up, gravely and anxiously, and remained silent.

"Don't you congratulate me?" pursued Julian, in a light tone. "Such a thing don't happen every day of one's life. I *will* be congratulated. Come, George, don't stare at me like a startled hare; I know you can't say anything pretty,—I don't expect that. I might wait till doomsday before your lips could frame a pretty speech; but say something,—say you wish me joy in my married life."

"Most earnestly I wish it," said George, seriously.

"Thank you! And I assure you, George," he continued, his spirits rising with the sight of his companion's gravity, "that there is every prospect of your earnest wishes being accomplished. I like your Judith very much."

George shook his head. "I wish I could have seen you serious, Julian, for once, and then *my* hopes in your prospects would have been more secure."

"I have been serious enough with Susan, George," said Julian, a cloud coming over his

face: "I have had one of my black moods this afternoon, and she has seen it,—seen it and chased it away. Susan is an angel! and when I ask you to congratulate me, it is because I feel that she will make me happy."

"And Miss Greville, Julian—shall you make *her* happy?"

"Of course I shall. Why, George, Susan loves me; she does, indeed,—loves me for myself. I, therefore, must be happy; and you know, when I am happy, there is no fear. Don't you allow that, in my good moods, I have the power to give happiness?" And his eyes shone with a radiant light, which spoke indeed "of the miraculous draught of happiness," and his whole frame seemed to partake in the smile which played on his countenance.

"You are, indeed, a very dangerous person, Julian," replied his companion, as he surveyed him, and the slight sigh that was suppressed was not a sigh for Susan. "I am not sure, however," he continued, with a smile, "that I should have entrusted my Judith to your care."

"Then you would have deprived Judith of a very good husband and a very happy life. But thank you, George; I see you trust me — I wish I could see you as happy as I feel," he added, affectionately.

George said nothing, but again took up his book, and Julian left him to his thoughts.

I watched Susan very anxiously that evening. Her countenance puzzled me. *We* had attained the wishes of years; and *she*, if I had read her rightly, should have been blest, most blest: but was she so? She was more full of thought than usual, and once, as she sat over her embroidery frame, I fancied that her brows knit, and that the peace which reigned over her face was for a moment dispelled. I have since thought that it was the weight of responsibility which weighed heavily upon her. A human being's happiness is an awful thing to take in trust; and it is not the consciousness of our own love that can lighten the burden, or our own desire to bless. There are such things as vain endeavours and ineffectual effort; there are smiles which are not responded to, soft words which fall powerless,

without the magic to soften or to cheer. Till now, Susan's powers had never failed; why did her heart sink within her now? I suppose an answer might readily be found—there are inward powers which measure love, and unconsciously show where the balance is wanting;—Julian's words of love were more, much more, than Susan's; but *she* knew who loved most, on whom, therefore, the burden of responsibility would lie; and already, strong and self-reliant as she naturally was, something of the dread of failure was stealing over her mind.

CHAPTER X.

Not always fall of leaf, nor ever spring,
Not endless night, nor yet eternal day
The saddest birds a season find to sing,
The roughest storm a calm may soon allay.
Thus with succeeding turns God tempereth all,
That man may hope to rise, and fear to fall.

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

SORROWS, Shakspeare says, come in battalions. I am sure visitors do so too. On the morning after Julian's proposal, the arrival of another guest was announced at our quiet Keevor.

Aunt Janet was always the first person to lay hold of the newspaper. For the last week, her hour for appearing at breakfast had been considerably advanced, from a dread, as we supposed, of George Vivian, who, on the morning after his arrival, had been most innocently

beforehand with her in looking over its contents.

"I say, Fulke—Mr. Greville," she said, looking up suddenly from the page before her, "have you read your letters this morning?"

"No, Aunt Janet," he replied, with a face rather scared and fluttered at her exclamation.

"Then I wish you would read them, and not dawdle over your toast in that way. There's some news, I can tell you."

Mr. Greville obediently put down his toast, and inspected his two letters; but observing that one had a black seal and a black border, he looked at Susan, and laid them aside again. A black border was at this time painfully and entirely connected in his mind with the death of his wife.

Susan left her seat, and came round to Aunt Janet. "What is it?" she asked, leaning over her.

Aunt Janet triumphantly pointed to an announcement among the "Deaths."

"Suddenly, on the 6th instant, at her resi-

dence in Brook-street, the Lady Frances Vere, in the 55th year of her age."

Susan made no exclamation, but glanced at her father. He had not ventured again to touch his toast, but was sitting with his eyes vacantly fixed on the black letter. She approached his chair, he started, and put the letter into her hand.

The purport of the communication will be gathered from the following short history.

Florence Vere was a ward of Mr. Greville's. She was the daughter of a sister of Mrs. Greville's, who had married an officer of good family but small fortune. Both father and mother had died early, and the child was left to the guardianship of a Lord Mortimer, a distant relation of the father's, and to Mr. Greville, a connexion of the mother's. There had seemed but little likelihood that either guardian would be troubled with the child, for she was adopted by a maiden aunt of Captain Vere's, with whom she had lived from eight years old to the present time.

The sudden death of Lady Frances Vere left

the young orphan wthout a home, and nearly destitute.

Her letter to Mr. Greville was written in great apparent distress, announcing the death of her aunt, and saying that she was desired to ask Mr. Greville to receive her at Keevor. Another letter from the solicitor of Lady Frances, entered into the circumstances more fully. He said that it had always been the intention of Lady Frances to provide for Miss Vere on her marriage; that unfortunately her sudden death had prevented the accomplishment of her good intentions. That Miss Vere was, therefore, left without any provision but her father's fortune—a sum, he said, more than sufficient for a young lady's needs, but very insufficient as a means of support. He had no doubt, he continued, that Lord Mortimer, who had always shown great kindness to his ward, would ultimately receive her into his family, but Lord Mortimer was at present at Rome in a very precarious state of health; and he had therefore taken upon himself to recommend Miss Vere to apply to Mr.

Greville to receive her until some arrangement could be made for her future destination.

After reading his letters, Mr. Greville's remark, as he took up his toast, and with a sigh, gave his mind to his breakfast, was—“Ah! Susan; I thought that black border meant something.”

Aunt Janet's was—“What! Florence Vere coming to Keevor—the fashionable, the beautiful, the highly accomplished Florence Vere! We are honoured, indeed. Susan, you must look to yourself—brush up your dress, hold up your head, turn out your toes.”

“Fashionable and highly accomplished,” exclaimed Julian. “I hate the girl already.”

There could be no doubt as to the answer to be returned, and in three weeks Florence Vere was to take up her temporary abode at Keevor Hall.

Those three intervening weeks passed swiftly away, and during those weeks Susan Greville tasted, I think, the fulness of human felicity.

As a sun breaking forth at the sunset hour

after a dull and sober day, lights up a landscape with rich unrivalled brilliancy, so fell the sun of Julian's love, and Julian's genius, and Julian's companionship, upon the calmness of her past life—and swiftly responsive to the call, powers of which she had never dreamt, thoughts, feelings, imaginations, awoke within her, making her cheek to glow, and her eye to kindle, into beauty.

And Julian, too, was happy—all was new to him, England, Keevor, Susan herself, with her quiet grace, her retiring, but not ungifted mind, her devoted love. No cloud, no fit of darkness, no prophetic shadows, obscured the brightness of his mind. They were continually together; Susan entered eagerly into all his tastes and pursuits, and he, happy in her presence, endeavoured to share with her in her soberer duties, and learned, or at least appeared to be learning, for the first time, that there were other beings in the world besides himself, and other pleasures than those of the wayward fancy alone.

I will not say that to me all was perfectly cloudless. “We are all,” it is said, “more or

less related to Chaos;" and Julian's relationship was certainly a very close one. In the light of happiness which now fell upon his heart, and which exhibited every whim and fancy, every thought and feeling as it arose, it was but too apparent to me, that although not void, all was "without form" within him —a tangled mass of confusion. There were precious metals without number, but strewed about so carelessly and disorderly as to be almost valueless. And sometimes I questioned with myself, what will follow when the excitement is past? Is there feeling sufficient to engross, principle sufficient to restrain, when novelty ceases?—and my answers were not always perfectly satisfactory.

Yet upon the whole I hoped—I could not but hope strongly, from the effects of constant intercourse with a character like Susan's, from whom, as it were, an emanation (for it was wholly without effort) of virtue, duty, and fixedness of principle, unceasingly and unconsciously flowed.

As "no news is good news," so an uneventful life is said to be a happy one; and though

I do not entirely agree to the remark, since the under-current of emotion is often deeper and sterner than that on the outward surface of things, yet it *was* true in this case. In these three weeks I have little to record.

Julian very early constituted himself our king and tyrant. It was his habit or destiny to usurp dominion, and had been so from his earliest infancy. None presumed to offer him contradiction or rebuff, except Aunt Janet, and hers, I believe, was but a rougher kind of worship.

"Now, Aunt Janet," he would say, "look at this drawing, and tell me if there was ever yet in the world such a master as I am. When the revolution comes, there is no doubt what my vocation will be. I took Susan to sketch the old ruin at Illingham. It is only her second attempt in sketching. What do you say of the master she has had the good fortune to meet with?"

"What do *you* say, Mr. Julian, to the proficiency of your pupil?"

"Ah, true, Aunt Janet, I forgot that!"

said Julian, laughing. "There, Susan, you have got a compliment at last."

"Not at all," replied Aunt Janet, scornfully. "What but proficiency could be expected when *Love* was the teacher. You need not blush, my dear Susan, there is nothing to be ashamed of."

Another night it was—

"Well, Aunt Janet, what do you think I have been doing to-day?"

"Some fool's business, I suppose," she replied.

"Thank you, no. Very much the contrary. I have been engaged on a work of wisdom. I went with Susan to the school, and have been teaching the young idea how to shoot. I did not dislike my occupation, but I am sorry to tell you that I disgraced myself. Mrs. Crump (if that is not her name I am sure it ought to be—how you could engage such a woman, Susan! You must get rid of her, and procure a pretty mistress, if you wish me to patronize your school again) well, Mrs. Crump desired me to examine the children in arithmetic; and they answered so fluently

to my questions, that, in an evil moment, I struck boldly into the seven line, and asked seven times nine. The sevens were my old enemies; I knew very well that I could not answer. To my dismay I ran along my circle of staring girls, and not one of them could reply. Fancy my situation. I was publicly disgraced; forced to confess my ignorance and apply to Susan. Now don't you feel for me, Aunt Janet?"

"I wonder who was right about the fool's business?" she said, triumphantly.

"My talents never developed themselves in arithmetic," he replied, playfully. "I am, I confess, lamentably ignorant of my multiplication table. Let us have a lesson to-night. Susan, you shall be the examiner, for I am quite certain that both George and Aunt Janet will fail in their sevens. Now begin!"

CHAPTER XI.

And thou sad sufferer under nameless ill
That yields not to the touch of human skill ;
To thee the dayspring and the blaze of noon
The purple evening and resplendent moon,
The stars that sprinkled o'er the vault of night
Seem drops descending in a shower of light,
Shine not, or undesired and hated shine,
Seen through the medium of a cloud like thine.

COWPER.

ONE morning when Julian came down to breakfast, (it was, I think, the day before Miss Vere's arrival,) rather late, as was his habit, for he was a great lover of repose, he found Aunt Janet loudly declaiming on the practice of keeping birthdays.

“ *I set my face against it,*” she was saying, as he entered. “ It is a foolish practice, and a very annoying one. Where there are many

birthdays, it is a perfect tax upon one's pocket. I knew a family once—there were twelve children—they are ruined now, and no wonder; I always told them what would be the end of it. This family chose to keep the birthdays of every one of the twelve children; the father and mother, and the children's children. There was no living in the house. I assure you, my temper, it is not often tried, but it was so tried by these birthdays that I had hardly patience to show common civility. I had rather have a birthday tax levied upon me at once. You know then, at any rate, what is expected from you; and, after all, who cares whether you are twenty, or sixty, or a hundred and forty?"

"True, Aunt Janet," said Julian, playfully, "when we get to a hundred and forty, our friends will, I fancy, be a little tired of keeping our birthdays; but up to that point let them be kept by all means. I would not have my birthday forgotten for all the world. But what is all this about? 'Who has got a birthday?' as my nurse would have said."

"Susan has," said Mr. Greville. "It

is Susan's birthday to-day, and I have given her that pretty white rosebud. I have been in a sad fright for fear it should blow before the time; but Marshall said it would do, and he was right. I picked it fresh this morning in all its beauty."

"Susan's birthday, is it?" observed Julian. "Now, Susan, I am very much offended, and more than offended—very much hurt. It is your birthday, and I was not to know it."

"I dare say Susan forgot it," interposed Mr. Greville, "till I came in with my pretty white rosebud. Susan never thinks about herself."

"No she didn't, she remembered it perfectly well—I see she did. I am hurt with you, Susan. I call it really unkind."

"A lovers' quarrel," remarked Aunt Janet. "Mr. George, (she had a particular fancy for calling people by their Christian instead of their Surnames whenever it was possible,) I think, Mr. George, you and I had better shut our eyes and stop our ears, and entertain each other as well as we can."

Julian hurried through breakfast with un-

usual speed. As he got up, he said to Susan, "You will not see me all day, Susan; I am offended with you," and he left the room.

Susan did not appear to be much alarmed at his anger. She guessed, I suppose, the cause of his absence, though she could scarcely guess that he was going to a town at a distance of twenty miles, where alone he thought a sufficiently fashionable jeweller could be found.

In the afternoon of the day Susan was returning alone from the village by a circuitous, unfrequented path, of which she was very fond, when she observed George Vivian approaching with the uncertain step and unobservant eye of one who walks for a walk, and has no other object. She paused, that he might join her. She was not sorry for this opportunity of meeting with him alone.

For the few days previous to Julian's engagement he had exerted himself as it afterwards appeared considerably; but from that time, day after day, he had sunk lower into despondency and gloom, and all our endeavours were insufficient to arouse him. Whether it

was that Julian's happiness formed too painful a contrast to his own feelings, whether a return to his own country awakened memory too clearly, or whether other thoughts, hopes, and desires were stirring within him, I could not then discover.

In common with all who saw him, Susan watched him with deep interest; and had pondered upon the mystery of his sorrow with the intense compassion which was a part of her nature; but though George Vivian evidently regarded her with no common feelings of admiration, although he had once expressed to me in the strongest language his sense of Julian's good fortune, yet to her endeavours to obtain his confidence, he had been as backward and unapproachable as to all others.

She paused at a gate which she was about to enter, and he joined her.

"Have you been walking far?" she inquired.

"Yes, taking one of my long strides, as Julian calls them. I went round by Illingham —the ruin is very fine."

"You refused to come with us the other day," Susan said, reproachfully.

He smiled a sad unmeaning smile—then employed himself in undoing the chain which hooked the gate *at* which they stood.

“Some might call you uncivil, Mr. Vivian,” Susan continued, as they passed through the gate and walked on; “but I only say that you are unkind.”

“Unkind!” he replied, quickly—“no, indeed!”

“We feel it so. Julian grieves over your absence, and *I* can only imagine that you must look upon me as very selfish, and think that I wish to separate Julian from one who has hitherto been his only friend.”

“Indeed, you mistake,” he said, sadly; “Julian does not like being alone, and therefore formerly even my company was better than solitude—now he has better society, and I do not wish to inflict my presence on his happiness.”

“And why inflict?”

“Because it *is* an infliction to witness misery which you cannot relieve,” he replied, almost sternly.

“It may be so to those who care only for

their own happiness; but will you give that character to Julian and to me?" She looked up at him as she spoke with her sweet smile, and those soft loving eyes, which spoke so deeply of sympathy and pity.

"You are very kind," he said, turning away his head with a sigh—but he said no more.

They walked on a little way in silence, then Susan began again—"Mr. Vivian, will you forgive me if I press upon a subject which you so evidently wish to avoid? It is not idle curiosity that makes me speak—you must trust me for that—nor do I ask or wish to ask why you are so miserable; but I must ask, can nothing ever comfort or relieve you? Cannot you imagine how painful it must be to us to see you unhappy, the more painful because we are happy. A thousand and a thousand times I have wished to speak to you, but dared not."

"You are very kind," he said again, with a quivering lip; but no more.

"Will you not answer me?" she continued, "Can nothing comfort or relieve you?"

"*Nothing*," he replied, despairingly.

" You must indeed be miserable," she said; and they walked towards the house in silence.

As they entered the garden, she stopped, and looking up at him again, said, gently and earnestly, " Do not think that I am going to force myself upon you, but I know how our feelings change,—and if ever you should change, if ever you should feel that anything could give you comfort, will you remember that even as Julian loves you, I love you; and that neither he nor I can ever be perfectly happy till you are happier. You *must* forgive me for speaking to you; it is my duty as well as my wish, for I feel that I have taken Julian from you, and perhaps added to your unhappiness."

" I feel your kindness," he said, in a voice of deep emotion. " I would thank you if I could, but I cannot." He paused, then still more agitatedly went on,— " And to show you that I feel it, I would tell you what it is that has made me the helpless, despairing wretch that I am, and ever must be; but I cannot do it—but ask Julian—let him tell you; and then,

if in all the world you see a ray of comfort for me, then tell me so, and I will bless you indeed."

He left her hurriedly.

As he entered the house, Julian appeared at the drawing-room window, shouting for Susan.

He saw her, and joined her where she stood; but the joyous spirits in which he had returned were checked by the glance he caught of George Vivian's countenance.

"What *is* the matter with George?" he asked, as he approached her.

Susan told him what had passed.

A cloud gathered on his brow. "I hate this subject, Susan; I hate to think of it; it makes me as miserable as poor George himself. But since he told you to ask me, I suppose I must tell you about it. He killed his brother, his only brother—shot him."

There are some trials whose very existence are a trial to the faith of the strongest, and this was one. That any human being should be doomed to the misery of cutting off—in the hour of gaiety and sport, in the bloom and freshness of youth, the life, perhaps the dearest

to them on earth—seems almost incredible, but such things have been.

Susan's brow contracted with the pain of the doubts that swept over the serenity of her soul.

"No wonder you look shocked, Susan," Julian said; "it always seems to me too horrible to be true. And there were many circumstances that added to the horror. It was his elder brother,—such a gay, handsome, high-spirited young man,—such a person, as one feels, should never die. It happened at Llandover, too, George's place, and you know, by that means, it became his own. One cannot wonder that he should hate the name of it. I will tell you about it as well as I can, but I only once heard it from George, and I never can wish to hear him mention it again. Though he is so reserved, and seems so cold, it is frightful to see him when he is roused. I think it must be nearly five years ago now; —the elder brother, Dudley his name was, was at Llandover in October; he wrote to George, who was on his way to Cambridge from Florence, to go down to him at once, for

that he had kept three capital days shooting for him. George cared for nothing but hunting and shooting in those days, though he was very steady at Cambridge, and read a good deal. Well, George and another person went down, and they were there alone, and all in great spirits. George was gay at that time, but he was nothing to Dudley. Dudley seemed to be made of happiness,—I don't think he knew what it was to have one moment's disquiet. On the third morning, George said he was not well, and that he would stay at home, or only join them late in the day; but they laughed at him. Dudley said it would be the best day of all; they forced him to go, in short. I always think he must have had some presentiment of evil. He don't know how it was, no one ever seemed to know; he had a bad headache, and he fancies his eyes may have been misty. But once he fired, and he heard a human cry; you may imagine, Susan, what a moment that was. He saw his brother stretched on the ground, and as pale as death. In a moment he was kneeling by his side; and Dudley opened his eyes. He just said, "Don't

be unhappy, George, it was no fault of yours,"—took his hand, and pressed it to his lips, and died. It *was* dreadful!—was it not, Susan, enough to break even a strong man's heart? They said that George fell down lifeless by his brother's side with a cry of agony that never could be forgotten; and for three days he remained in a stupor from which nothing could rouse him. When he did recover, they wished him in a stupor again, for he was mad, distracted,—a most dreadful kind of madness, with some consciousness of what he had done; kept wringing his hands, and calling to Dudley to forgive him; and this madness went on for some weeks. At one time they thought he never could come to his senses again; but he did at last, and then he fell into that state of despondency in which you see him now. Poor George!" he said, and he remained silent; and Susan, too, was silent, with downcast eyes, pondering upon what she had heard.

Julian began again. "George has never been at Llandover since that day, and he says he never will see it again. He can't sell it, or I am sure he would. He hates to think of

it as his own. I don't wonder at him. I am sure I should feel as he does; but it is a pity, for I believe it is dreadfully neglected by the agent he employs."

" Yet he should go there—don't you think so, Julian?" Susan said, thoughtfully. " It can't be right to neglect it, because he is unhappy."

" I don't know—I don't know much about *right*—but if you think his neglect wrong, I believe that would be the way to work upon George. The fact is, I am afraid that he was very injudiciously treated. His mother was in weak health at the time of the accident, and she was very much shocked at the news of her son's death—so much so, that my father never told her the truth about what had happened—he never dared; and when poor George came to Florence, looking more dead than alive, the first thing my father said, was to implore him to conceal his feelings and the truth. This made George feel *guilty*, I think. He drove the past back into his mind, and brooded upon it unceasingly, and I wonder his

mother did not suspect something; but she was very unhappy herself; Dudley was her great favourite, and I suppose she thought his extreme misery was only natural. He did not stay with us long. He left Florence, and for two years went travelling about in all sorts of strange places, till his mother was taken dangerously ill, and he was sent for home. He came only two days before her death, and he was almost mad again then; he said she should not die without knowing what he had done, and forgiving him; and as she was then given over, my father allowed him to speak—and there was, I believe, a dreadful scene. She was so affected by what he said, that George always feels that he hastened her death. I don't think it was his confession that affected her so deeply; it would not, of course; it was a mistaken idea of my father's; but she was so terrified at his agitation, and so weak, that she could not comfort him, as I am sure she wished to do. Poor George," he said, again passing his hand over his eyes, "there are some things,

Susan, which I am almost afraid to think of, some things which almost make me doubt if the God we serve can be a God of mercy."

"But we must not doubt, Julian," Susan said, looking up with her brow clear and serene again, in his face.

"No," he said, with a sigh; "and I never do when I am with you; but don't talk of this any more; I hate to think of such misery."

In a moment, with a mere shake of his head, he shook off the gloom from his mind, and the cloud from his brow, and turning playfully to Susan, said, "Now, Susan, for an explanation, and an apology for your misdemeanour. Why am I to be treated like a scullion, and not to be allowed to know anything that concerns you? You have hurt my feelings."

Susan smiled, but sadly. "I did not mean to conceal anything, Julian; but I was once very unhappy on this day, and I never think of it as my birthday—no one ever does except papa."

"Ah, Susan!" he said, affectionately; "I

think I know what you mean; but you must let me be like your father and remember it, for it must be a happy day to me. Even over the sorrow of this day I cannot grieve, for perhaps but for that I should never have known you. So now, let me show you that I like, love, respect, and esteem this day more than all the days of the year.” He smilingly took from his pocket a jeweller’s case, and displayed a pretty gold bracelet with a diamond clasp, and two lockets hanging to it. It certainly did credit to a country jeweller. “I have been behaving in a most tyrannical manner at —, I am sorry to say, but when I want a thing done, it is no use to tell me that it can’t be done; it must; and so I have proved, for I have got all I want. Now, Susan, hold out your arm; I put this on you myself, and woe to him who takes it off again.” With a slight change of manner, he went on more seriously—“One locket has my hair, the other has my mother’s. I hardly remember her, but somehow I feel as if she must have been like you; and I wish you, Susan, to be such a friend to me as my mother would

have been—not despairing or mistrusting me, however bad I may be." He clasped the bracelet on her arm, then holding it for a moment, said, playfully, "If I ever see your arm without this, Susan, I shall know what I am to think—*you will have given me up.* And now go to George, for I see you are hankering after him all the while I am speaking to you."

CHAPTER XII.

I bring your anguish no relief,
I scorn, like you, the opiate spell ;
But barren woes, like joys, are brief—
If faithful you would make your grief,
 Grieve calmly, and grieve well.

DE VERE.

SUSAN hastened to look for George Vivian—but here, remembering the beautiful words of Bulwer, let me pause.

“Some griefs there are which grief alone can guess,
And so we leave whate’er he felt untold ;
Light steps profane the heart’s deep loneliness.”

To administer comfort to a mind diseased like George Vivian’s, was not a difficult task. The very tranquillity of manner which could listen to his tale, and dwell upon his griefs without a too evident emotion, was in itself

no slight consolation. He had told his history but twice—once in a dying ear, and death had too quickly followed—a second time to one whose excitement of mind was little calculated to assuage the throbings of a wounded heart. Thus driven back into himself, the tale of sorrow had swelled to a tale of horror, and almost of guilt. Susan's manner, therefore, at once so intense and absorbed that it gave to grief all it asked of sympathy and compassion, and yet so calm and serene, that without words it spoke of the high untroubled Heaven which solves the problem of human misery, was especially calculated to carry comfort, and hope, and repose.

But with the quickness of one who had thought much, she saw at once that sympathy was not all the comfort that his case required. She looked through to the root of the evil, and to the cure. Young as she was, the subject of the sorrow and evil of the world had occupied a large portion of her thoughts. Even in her early days, while she watched the sufferings of her innocent brother, she had questioned, with the youthful boldness of an

inquiring mind, *why* he was thus afflicted. As she grew older, and was made acquainted by her mother with the ills of poverty, and the stern sorrows of poverty and sickness united, she had pondered and questioned with yet deeper reflection. She did not speak of her feelings, but she watched, read, and thought; and from her reflections she drew at last—

“Thoughts whose sternness makes them sweet.”

She learnt to consider all “afflictions, whether light or grave,” as messengers sent down from Heaven, charged with a message, and bound to perform some work which they, and they only, can perform. Dark may be the coming of the messenger, and severe his message; but where it is so, well it may be believed that hard is the task which he has to perform. With deeper thoughts she dwelt upon the remembrance that, afflictions being from Heaven, must, like other gifts and talents, leave a deep responsibility behind them. To receive—even to submit, is not enough; they who do no more than receive,

can scarcely escape the sentence of the servant who hid his lord's money in the earth.

Thus accustomed to reflect, although the nature of the present affliction might for a moment shake her confidence, it was not difficult to Susan to assist George Vivian to trace the good that was hidden in the darkness that clouded over his head; it was from her heart —from a depth of conviction that she spoke, when with her gentle voice she endeavoured to arouse him from his lethargy, and to remind him of the responsibility laid upon his shoulders even by that especial and awful Providence which had marked him among men.

Following and overcoming the perversity of grief, answering the agony of reluctance when she pressed upon him the duties of his neglected home—unwearied, though her words appeared to fall, like droppings of idle water, powerless to reach the hard and beaten misery of his heart, so she endeavoured to perform the task of comforter which she had taken upon herself. Bishop Taylor has beautifully said, “God hath sent some angels into the world, whose office is to refresh the sorrows of the poor, and

to lighten the eyes of the disconsolate." I have always applied the words to Susan, for even such appeared to be her mission upon earth.

I know not—it may have been in that hour, while that sweet voice was falling upon his ear, that a deep, enduring, lifelong passion took possession of his mind. I cannot say that it was so; it may have been already there; it may have been afterwards that he became conscious of it; but pity, in other senses than the poet has it, melts the mind to love; and although right words are very forcible, yet perhaps without the assistance of some other feeling, the effect of Susan's words was more than words usually have power to perform.

He said little at the moment, but when Susan left the drawing-room with her father, at bed-time, George Vivian, with a slight movement, put Julian aside, and went to open the door.

He lighted her candle, placed it in her hand, and then said, "I must wish you good-

bye. I shall be gone before you are up to-morrow morning."

"Are you going to leave us?" she inquired, startled at the announcement.

"Yes," he said, gravely, "I am going to Wales."

Surprised as she was at the suddenness of the change, she fancied that he did not wish for any comment upon his resolution. She said only, with a kind smile, as she held out her hand,—

"You must not be long away. Julian has not learned to do without you yet, and you know I am only beginning to make acquaintance with you."

He pressed her hand gravely and gratefully, but said no more. At that time we none of us discovered that he was more than usually agitated, or excited; he had been even less abstracted than was common to him, and yet what a multitude of conflicting emotions were agitating his breast on that night.

CHAPTER XIII.

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in the grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

GEORGE HERBERT.

"So, Mr. George is off," exclaimed Aunt Janet, when Julian came down to breakfast on the following morning. "What precious business has taken him off in such a hurry?"

As she received no answer to her query, she proceeded: "I know very well that there

must be some meaning in it. People don't set off at an hour's notice like maniacs, without some reason. Is it a love business, Mr. Julian?"

"You think a great deal about love, Aunt Janet, I observe," said Julian, drily.

"Don't be pert, Mr. Julian. I've good reason to think a great deal about love. I've seen a great many sufferings from it, and caused them too."

Julian allowed the conversation to drop. I had observed when he first came down that a slight cloud was on his brow—too slight to have been remarked, if it had not been the first settled cloud which I had seen since his engagement. Some cause as light as air had ruffled his serenity, and he was not prepared as usual for his encounter with Aunt Janet's wits.

His silence was, however, rather an incentive than otherwise to her tongue.

"Well, so the expected day is come at last. Who remembers that our breakfast-table tomorrow morning will be graced by the presence of the gay, the beautiful, the fascinating

Miss Vere? Are you aware of the fact, Susan?"

"I think I am," she replied, smiling.

"Of course; I need not have doubted that *you* would remember. Young ladies are not in the habit of forgetting their rivals. How do you feel, Susan? Are you prepared for combat—gathering up your powers—brushing up your charms?"

"I think you are talking a great deal of nonsense this morning," said Julian, rather sharply.

"And I think you are very pert this morning, Mr. Julian. What nonsense do I talk? When two beautiful young women meet in one house, I believe it is not very unusual that there should be rivalry between them."

"But I am not a beautiful young woman," Susan said, smiling again: "and so there can be none."

"Don't argue, Susan—you know very well what I mean. You need not take it all to yourself in that way. You know very well that nobody could have called you beautiful."

"Yes, you did, Aunt Janet; and so do I.

In my eyes Susan can have no rival," and he gave her a look so loving and affectionate, that I wondered not at the crimson which died her cheeks. I wished, however—and so I think did Susan before now—that Julian was less public in his expressions of affection (but such was his nature, always following the feeling of the moment); and I wondered less than usual at Aunt Janet's hasty remark: "Really, what with love, and what with lovers, one don't know which way to look in this house."

As she was leaving the breakfast-room, she called to Susan—"I am going to look at Miss Vere's room, Susan. You have been making a great fuss, but a great fuss does not always make comfort. I looked in yesterday, and I observed that there was no footstool. Depend upon it she will want a footstool. You had better come and look after the arrangements a little, and don't stand there gossiping with Julian, all day long."

"Aunt Janet is in a very meddlesome humour this morning," remarked Julian.

"I think *she* is much the same as usual,"

replied Susan; "but I think *you* are thinking of something else, Julian, are you not? Are you sorry that Mr. Vivian is gone?"

"Rather more sorry that Miss Vere is coming," he said, throwing open the window, and stepping out into the garden. "I have been very happy, and I don't wish to be interrupted."

"You don't think that we could have done otherwise than invite her to come here, do you?" Susan asked, anxiously.

"No, perhaps not. But I hate to be disturbed when I am happy."

"I suppose we must have been disturbed soon," Susan said, smiling.

"Why—what should disturb us?"

"Should you be satisfied with a life as quiet as the life we have been leading?" she looked up, inquiringly, in his face.

"Do you doubt it, Susan?"

"A little."

"And do you *like* to doubt it?" he said, turning, with some curiosity, to read her countenance.

"*I* have been very happy, Julian, and wish

for no change, unless you should wish it. But I sometimes doubt if you are suited to a quiet life. If you were to feel this as I do, and to wish for a life of greater action, I should not regret it. I could be ambitious for your sake."

"Don't be ambitious for me, Susan," he said, in a melancholy tone, "for you would be disappointed." He gave a momentary glance into his heart, and reading the secret of its defects, his brow clouded. He went on—"I am sometimes ambitious, too. I think I will do some great thing, or sometimes some good thing; and for a week, perhaps, it fills all my mind, and then it is all gone again—it wearies me. It is my nature, Susan; I never like anything for a long time together."

A slight expression of pain passed over Susan's countenance. Julian had been looking at her affectionately, and he saw it. "I did not mean that I *loved* only for a short time, Susan. I was going to tell you that I think a quiet life is the best for me. I have not been restless since I knew you. I never was so happy in my life before, as I have been

since I came to Keevor. I think I have at last found what I want—peace, and happiness, and love, no great things, to excite me and then make me wretched again; but every day your love, charming me like a new thing.” He looked at her so fondly, smiling upon her with his glorious eyes, that Susan’s heart bounded with joy.

“I will tell you how it is, Susan,” he said, gaily, in one moment the cloud of the morning, dispersing like an airy vapour—

“The bee through many a garden roves,
And hums his lay of courtship o’er,
But when he finds the flower he loves,
He settles there and roves no more.

I have been from place to place, and pursuit to pursuit, and from person to person, in search of rest, but none were destined for me, and so I was restless still. Now I have found the flower I love, so let me settle down, and rove no more. Don’t talk of ambition—let us be quietly happy at Keevor; and now I know you are in a hurry to go to your father, and don’t want to stay gossiping here with me, so just get me a volume of Byron, and I will

bask in this glorious sunshine. I never saw a more unclouded sky even in Italy."

Susan left him, happy and hopeful, but I do not know if the excitable mood of the morning did not leave an unconscious weight upon her heart.

There had been a little bustle at Keevor during the last few days, in the preparations that were making for Miss Vere's arrival, but I had taken little interest in the subject; I hardly know why, I felt a kind of grudge against Miss Vere, though she was totally unknown to me. I believe, like Julian, that I had been very happy of late, and I did not wish our happiness to be interrupted. This morning, however, as I was going to my own room, I had the curiosity to turn out of my direct road, and going down a long passage, to peep into the room which was preparing for Miss Vere.

The house at Keevor was furnished in a very old-fashioned, and, I must confess, in a heavy and rather gloomy manner. Mrs. Greville, who was scrupulously neat and clean, had had all the old furniture, and the

old damask hangings taken down, cleaned and repaired; but, without exercising any taste in the restoration, had replaced them from whence they had been removed. With some rooms, the heavy, old furniture harmonized well; to others—for, as I have said, the house was very irregularly built—a lighter and more modern style would have been appropriate, and I had rather wondered that Susan, who had an eye for beauty, which her mother never possessed, should not have endeavoured to improve her old home.

As I glanced in at the door of Miss Vere's room, I could scarce trust my eyes that I saw rightly, so wonderful was the transformation that had taken place. I pushed open the door, and went further in to examine. There were two rooms, of moderate size, opening into each other—a large square bed, with damask curtains, having formerly filled the one, and a large strangely-shaped wardrobe the other. To my eyes they now appeared like a paradise. The walls were papered with a light sea-green paper, with a border of acorns and dark oak-leaves; the curtains of the room,

and of the little French bed, were of the same colour, with a covering of very thin muslin, which gave, at least to my inexperienced fancy, a great beauty and softness to the appearance of the hangings. The furniture was, I believe, of the same material. Green stands with flowers were placed in the windows of the sitting-room, and the bright south sun shone in so temptingly, that I was betrayed into feelings of most sinful envy when I thought of the fair possessor of these apartments.

"You have made this very grand," I said to Bessie—now Mrs. Lee—who was arranging some mysterious folds of lace and muslin over the looking-glass on the toilet table.

"I have had nothing to do with it, sir," she replied; "it is all done by Miss Greville's orders."

"I did not know that Miss Greville had such good taste," I remarked.

"Few do understand Miss Greville, sir," she said. But Bessie was not a talker, and she went quietly on with her business, without bestowing any attention upon me.

I turned with a sigh to leave the rooms,

which had strangely attracted my fancy, and as I went, innocently observed to Bessie,—“I think Miss Vere will be surprised to find that she is come to a paradise at Keevor.”

To which Bessie replied, with more philosophy, “It is not a room, sir, that makes a paradise; and we cannot expect that these things should strike Miss Vere as they strike us.”

I could not but own the truth of her remark; yet, as I returned to my own less attractive, although, till that morning, much beloved turret, I indulged in another sigh of envy over the good fortune of Miss Vere, and I believe, on this one single point, I was fortunate enough to excite a fellow-feeling in the breast of Miss Janet Greville.

Towards six o’clock on that evening, Susan and Julian were in the garden, awaiting the arrival of Miss Vere.

They stood with Mr. Greville and his faithful companion, Marshall, around a large bed of roses. Mr. Greville was cutting off the

shriveled heads of the flowers, and sighing and moaning over their rapid fading.

"It is always the way," he said; "we have hardly time to say, How fair is creation! how sweet the flowers! how fresh and gay these beds of roses! before one by one they fade and die, and leave us to mourn their loss."

"As for the roses, they certainly are tee-totally gone," remarked Marshall; "but the pinks and geraniums are a-coming out remarkable well."

"Yes, papa," said Susan, consolingly, "look at that bed,—the garden will be as gay as ever again."

"I don't know, Susan,—I am always sad when the roses are gone. We never shall see them again."

Julian gathered a beautiful rose, one of the few remaining ones, and gave it to Susan, saying, with a smile—

"The rose that decks the garden bower,
Although it be a lovely flower,
Is not the same that blest thine eyes
When June last spread her laughing skies.
And ere another sun be set
Another parting must be met."

"That is what you feel, is it not?" he said, turning to Mr. Greville. "I agree with you,—I wish these roses could last for ever."

"That is very pretty, Julian,—where did you learn it?

"Ere another sun be set,
Another parting must be met,"

he repeated, fondly and childishly, as he hung over his flowers. "But now, Marshall," he continued, "we have done this part of the garden,—we must be going on."

"I hope you will not go very far, papa," Susan observed; "Florence must be here directly, and you know you will be sorry if you are not ready to meet her."

"Yes, Susan, very true; still I should not be sorry to cut a few more roses this evening—it makes me sad to see these faded flowers. I shall not be far away, and you must call me; or I dare say you will hear the wheels, Marshall, and *you* can tell me."

"I am rather hard of hearing," remarked Marshall, honestly.

"Well, Susan will hear, and she must call

me;" and he pottered away with his basket and scissors, and Marshall after him.

"Oh, this Florence—this Florence!" exclaimed Julian; "how I wish her in the depths of the Red Sea."

Susan laughed.

"It is no laughing matter, Susan, I assure you; I feel a positive antipathy to the girl. I know I shall not be able to behave civilly."

"She is not a person for an antipathy, Julian; there you are quite wrong. If you don't like, you must admire. She is, I think, almost perfectly beautiful."

"But, my dear Susan, don't you know that I don't care about beauty—not that kind of beauty. Now I will tell you what this Florence is like—I can see her exactly. She is like that rose," and he pointed to the one which Susan had fastened into her muslin gown,— "beautiful, I allow, quite beautiful, but gaudy and showy; every one that comes into the garden must remark it, and say, 'What a beautiful rose!' all open, too, nothing more to hope for—nothing more to unfold—nothing more to interest. Now, Susan, am I not right? Is not that rose like Florence?"

"So far like," said Susan, smiling, "that you could not pass her by; every one must say—'What a beautiful flower!' But though I know her very little, I am sure that her character is very unlike your description. She has always interested *me*, and made me wonder what she really thinks and feels."

"It is no use contradicting yourself now, Susan; I knew I was right. She is a gaudy, showy rose, and I like such things no more. What I like now is the violet—

' Its stalk is bent,
It hangs its head;
It seems to hide from view,—
And yet it is a lovely flower.'"

And he laid his hand on Susan's arm, and looked in her face, till, as he loved to do, he called the tints of the roses there. "Yes, Susan, I don't like showy beauties any more. I like the beauties which are hidden, which one has to stoop to find. And when one has stooped, one finds how numberless the flowers, how beautiful the colours, how sweet the smell. So," he added, smiling—

“Let me to the valley go
This pretty flower to see,
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.”

And now there are the wheels; and now, Susan, I take myself off, and I will go and give warning to your father.”

“Susan! Susan! she is come!” cried Aunt Janet, popping her head out of a window; “such a load of boxes; you would think it was the arrival of Madame Maradau herself!”

“Such a load of boxes” was still vibrating in the air, when, before Susan could reach the house, Miss Vere stepped hastily out of the drawing-room window, and came forward to meet her; and before Susan could speak, she had thrown her arms round her neck, and burst into a passionate flood of tears.

“My dear Florence,” said Susan, gently—but, surprised and anxious, attempted to lead her back into the drawing-room, out of sight of Mr. Greville, Aunt Janet, and Marshall, who were all approaching; not to speak of the eyes of a very curious housemaid, which were

positively darting out of a window above—but Florence resisted.

“Never mind, Susan,” she said, recovering herself; “it is nothing—I had rather go through with it at once.” She dashed her handkerchief over her eyes, but tears again fell fast as she went up to Mr. Greville, and in grateful and forcible terms, though in a faltering voice, thanked him for his kindness in receiving her.

The poor man had unnumbered kind and pretty speeches on his lips; but he was so fluttered at her thanks, and so scared at her tears, that he was unable to recover himself sufficiently to say a word. Florence then turned to Aunt Janet, and shook hands with her, and then made a sign to Susan that she was ready to go with her.

“To my own room, if you please, Susan,” she said, as they entered the drawing-room.

And when she reached her room, she flung herself violently on the sofa, and burst into a fresh fit of weeping.

Susan sat by her for a few moments in silence, then fetched her a glass of water.

She tasted it, sighed, dried her eyes, jumped up—then turning to Susan said, with a laugh—“ This is a pretty beginning, you will think, Susan; but it’s over now. I am not going to worry you any more with my sorrows. What a figure I have made of myself,” she said, standing before the looking-glass. “ I don’t always look as ugly as this, I assure you.”

Susan smiled, but she really was astonished at the strange and volatile manner of her cousin, and supposing it to come from the excitement of the moment, she left her to rest and compose herself before dinner time. Florence at first objected to the proposal of being left alone; but at last owning to a bad headach, agreed to lie down for a short time.

CHAPTER XIV.

Who hath not felt how feebly words essay
To fix one spark of beauty's heavenly ray.

BRIDE OF ABYDOS.

Human bodies are sic fools,
For all their colleges and schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They make enow themselves to vex them,
An ay the less hae they to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them.

BURNS.

SUSAN and Miss Vere came down together at dinner-time. I was already in the drawing-room. Miss Vere had been at Keevor in her childhood; but since her mother's death she had had little intercourse with the Greenville family, and I saw her then for the first time.

I had heard much of her beauty. I was

prepared—not to love, but to wonder and admire; but all my anticipations fell short of the reality. I almost started as my eyes fell upon her. Her figure was tall and slight, but not too slight, and was both graceful and dignified. There was something of pride in the way in which the small head was placed upon her neck, but it became her. Her hair was very dark, but her complexion, though pale, was dazzlingly white. I do not know that the outline of her features was strictly regular, but they had every beauty, except perfect regularity; and her eyes, at once deep set and brilliant, at once sparkling and melancholy, were in themselves sufficient to entitle her to the claim of surpassing loveliness.

She was in mourning, but not in such deep mourning as I should have expected to see after the loss of so near a relative, and so true a friend. Black lace was thrown over her shoulders, and falls of the same were becomingly twisted in her hair, and floating mingled with her curls upon her shoulders. Fatigue, and perhaps feeling, had on this night given a softness to her countenance

which it sometimes wanted; and I never saw her look equally beautiful, except on one occasion, and then her beauty was in a different style.

Julian came down, according to his custom, late. As he crossed the room, Susan called him, and introduced him to Miss Vere. Myself perhaps a foolish admirer of beauty, I watched with uncontrollable anxiety the effect which her appearance would have upon him; but he merely paused for an instant, bowed without raising his eyes, and retreated to a distant window, where he stood looking out into the garden. Aunt Janet joined him.

“Well, Mr. Julian, what do you say to our beauty?”

“I haven’t seen her,” he said, shortly and carelessly.

“Haven’t seen her! Stuff! Why, you have just been speaking to her.”

“I have not seen her,” he persisted.

“Well, if you really have not seen her, just turn your head round, and you will see her now.”

“Thank you, I can wait. I have no curiosity,” and he began indifferently to pull a flower to pieces.

"I tell you what, Mr. Julian, she's worth looking at. I don't care for beauty myself—I think it all stuff; but for those who do—and I suppose you, with your nonsense about pretty schoolmistresses, are one—she's what I call a regular fine woman."

"I hate fine women," he said, with an expression of disgust.

"Out of sorts, I see, Mr. Julian. Well, I won't trouble you—every man has a right to be out of temper, if he pleases.—Mr. Julian is a little out of sorts," she proclaimed as she left the window, but dinner was announced at the same moment, and her observation fell to the ground.

The evening passed heavily away, as evenings will do where the person who has accustomed himself to be chiefly considered, chooses to be out of humour. I had no idea that Julian could make himself so disagreeable, and I should have been amused at his childishness, if the view which it gave me of the folly and selfishness of his disposition had not been rather painful than amusing.

Susan, as was natural under the melancholy

circumstances which brought her cousin, so lately courted and admired, a desolate orphan to her father's house, devoted herself to make her feel welcome, and at her ease; and whether Julian, accustomed—too much accustomed—to be the first object of her care, felt, or chose to fancy, himself aggrieved; or whether, really shy and sensitive as he was, the disturbance of his perfect ease and comfort made him really uncomfortable, I do not know. I believe the latter was partly the case; but whatever the cause might be, he acted like a naughty child, and as unlike a reasonable being as could well be imagined.

When he came into the drawing-room, Susan invited him, with a smile, half inviting, half imploring, to come and assist her in entertaining Miss Vere—no easy task; for, accustomed to amusement and attention, Miss Vere required much to excite her. But with a wilful shake of his head, he threw himself into an arm-chair, near enough to listen, too far off to partake in the conversation. His under lip was pouting, his hair in disorder, as it usually was, from his restless movements,

when, as Aunt Janet said, he was "out of sorts." There he remained for the evening. Though he usually took little interest in the newspapers, he read several from beginning to end, rustling as he read. When this was done, he turned over a book of prints, upside down, for nearly half an hour. When this, too, was finished, there being no other occupation within his reach, he lay back in his chair, tapping the elbow with a paper cutter.

"You had better order a chaise to be prepared to convey me to the nearest lunatic asylum, Mr. Julian," Aunt Janet cried, at last, (the only one who dared to speak,) her imperturbable nerves overcome by the fidgeting nature of his amusement.

At this he laughed and desisted, and observing that his brow cleared, I expected a change of conduct; but after a moment's thought, he got up and fetched another book of prints, to which he devoted himself for the rest of the evening.

Half-past ten came, at length, to relieve us all, and Susan left the room with her father and Miss Vere. As she passed Aunt Janet,

she made her a whispered entreaty to remain in the drawing-room for a short time longer.

After an absence of about ten minutes, she returned, and rather timidly approached the chair where Julian was still sitting. But he was ashamed, I think, of his ill-humour, for he got up, lit her candle, and followed her to the door.

"I hope you have had a pleasant evening?" he inquired.

"Do you think I have?" she said, with a smile.

"Indeed, you and Miss Vere appeared to be enjoying yourselves uncommonly," he said, drily.

"Oh, Julian! you must not be so uncivil again."

"*Must*, Susan!" with a slight accent of displeasure. "I really don't see that I am bound to love *everybody* that sets their foot in this house. I dislike Miss Vere,—I told you I should; I have no wish to cultivate her acquaintance."

Susan shook her head, half gravely, half playfully, but she would not stay to argue

with him. She held out her hand, and wished him good night.

He took it affectionately: then, with one of his rapid changes of manner, said, in his tenderest and most loving tone—"Can you wonder, Susan, that I dislike her, when she deprives me of you? This is the first evening when, as I wished you good-night, I have not blessed the day which first brought me to Keevor."

And what remembrance of a selfish or unamiable disposition did Susan carry with her to her rest! Thus, day by day, with his varying frowns and smiles, he wound himself more closely round her heart.

With many people, an ebullition of temper is as a clap of thunder,—it clears the air. I do not say the cure is a proper one, but it often is a cure. With Julian it was otherwise: once disturbed, his mind lost its balance, and it was difficult for him to regain it again. Cowper's lines were especially applicable to him—

" Man is a harp whose chords elude the sight,
Each yielding harmony disposed aright;
The screws reversed . . .
A thousand thousand strings at once go loose."

The ill-humour which had been, partly at least, wilful the preceding evening, had changed to settled gloom on the following morning.

When breakfast was over, Susan having attended to her father, read to him, as she usually did, and arranged the routine of his occupations for the day, went to the drawing-room in search of Florence, and, with a hope of being joined there, as was his custom, by Julian.

Miss Vere was alone, and was sitting listless and idle at the window. She jumped up as Susan entered, with an expression of weariness.

“What a time you have been, Susan; I thought you would never come.”

“Have you been waiting for me all this while? I am very sorry, but I could not come before.”

“Oh, well, you are come to stay now—that’s something,” as Susan took out her work, and sat down in the window. “I have been gazing out upon the beauties of Keevor; it is a pretty place, but, my dear Susan, it is dreadfully dull. I have seen a gardener, and a

sparrow, and a butterfly, and that is all that I have seen during this long hour that I have been waiting for you. How do you amuse yourself here?"

"I have not much difficulty," said Susan, smiling; "but I can quite understand how dull it must seem to you. I wish I was better able to amuse you."

"Oh, thank you, Susan; I dare say in time I shall do very well. If you can bear it, I suppose I can." She sat down in the window again, and leant her head upon her hands—her long eyelashes resting upon her cheek—her dark curls blown slightly back from her face. Susan paused in her work to watch her—her attitude was so beautiful, her whole appearance so graceful, so interesting.

Florence looked up—"What were you looking at, Susan?"

Susan smiled, and shook her head, and took up her needle again.

"I know you were thinking about me; what was it, Susan?—I will know."

"I think you know without my telling you, Florence."

"I suppose you were admiring me, then. Well, Susan, you need not be afraid to tell me so; I shan't be puffed up by admiration now. I don't think I have much reason to be puffed up about anything—

'Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen !
Fallen from my high estate.' "

And again she leant her head upon her hands, and a tear fell from her long lashes.

"My dear Florence," said Susan, gently, "I am sure you are very unhappy."

"Sometimes very, sometimes not." She paused for a moment, then looked up quickly. "I am not unhappy about my aunt; I can't allow you to think me so amiable as that. I was very much shocked at her death, of course, and very grateful to her for all her kindness; but I did not *love* her, Susan—not the least. She was not a sort of person one could, at least that *I* could love—shallow, heartless. Oh, no! if I am unhappy, it is about myself."

"And what is it that makes you most unhappy?"

"Myself, Susan, my future prospects—a

homeless dependent orphan — wearied with myself and with everything in the world, caring for nobody and nobody caring for me; that is not a very pleasant state of things, you will allow." She paused again—then, interrupting Susan before she could speak, she jumped up and said, gaily, "but this is a very dolorous conversation, Susan, and not very likely to enliven my dejected spirits—let us talk of something else."

"Oh!" exclaimed Aunt Janet, putting her head in at the door; "so Mr. Julian is not here."

"No," Susan said. "Do you want him?"

"Oh, dear, no—I only supposed that, *of course*, I should find him here, as usual. Can I do anything for you, Susan? I am going to take a walk before the heat of the day comes on—good-bye—that's all;" and she closed the door.

Florence looked at Susan, but said nothing. She saw Julian's avoidance, but was too proud to notice it. She walked in silence to the pianoforte.

"You have got a quantity of music, Susan. I thought you said you did not sing."

“ It is Julian’s music,” she replied.

“ Oh! Mr. Julian Greville sings, does he?”

She said no more, but turned restlessly over the songs.

“ I wish you would sing, Florence. I remember four years ago coming in for the end of a song, in Brook-street, and you would not begin again; you said ‘another day,’ which never came.”

“ Yes, I remember. I did not think you worth singing to, that was the fact, Susan; and you must forgive me, as I was proud of my singing then, and you were only fourteen—and a cousin. You shall hear as much as you please now.” She opened the pianoforte, and her fingers ran along the keys with the touch of a master. “ I am not in my best voice—a little hoarse—a cold, of course,” looking back and laughing. “ Really, Susan, not in good voice, for I have not sung a note for above a month. I am obliged to mention the fact, because, as singing is my only accomplishment, I must have my due share of admiration for it. Now, I think I can guess what your style of music will be.”

She played two or three expressive chords, and began at once a slow, solemn movement from a Mass, by Naumann—"Agnus Dei." Susan paused in her work to listen; every note of the wonderful music thrilling her heart with an almost painful ecstasy. Florence's voice was a contralto, full, deep, and clear; but, for its unutterable softness, too powerful perhaps for a room; but every note, as it swelled high and full, was caught and tamed by the perfection of her art, and died away with the softness of a whisper.

She sang to the end of the slow movement, solemnly, expressively, reverently; but the last note of the voice, the last chord of the music was still vibrating on the air, when she struck at once into a light and lively serenade,—a pretty, but common Italian love-song.

"Well, Susan," she cried, jumping up as she quickly finished her performance, "how do you like my singing?"

Susan had returned to her work; she looked up with a slight smile and a slight shake of

her head. "I might have thought you were a second St. Cecilia, Florence, if you had not so quickly drawn me with you to earth again."

"My dear Susan, how very precise you are. I assure you there was no harm in my little song. Do you disapprove of those pretty words—'t'amo, t'amo?' You, of all people, ought to have patience with them."

"It was not of them I disapproved," Susan said, smiling; "you know very well what I meant."

"You meant something very solemn and precise, that I am sure of. But do you like love songs?—I don't suppose you do."

"I think I like them better than all others," Susan said, with a slight blush; "but I only judge from Julian's singing; I have heard very few. Will you sing me one?"

"Perhaps I shan't be as successful as Mr. Julian Greville," Florence said, drily; "but I will sing you a great favourite of mine—a regular, true, love song, and tell me how you like it."

She sat down again, and sang—

“ Oh ! when it is too late, thou wilt regret me,
In vain thou’lt strive to hate and to forget me,
Thy love for me in vain thou’lt strive to smother,
And ne’er again wilt thou so love another.

Oh ! when it is too late, and I am forsaken,
Affection once so great will reawaken,
And then wilt thou renounce the spells that bound
thee,
And sigh for those that once so fondly loved thee,
But when it is too late.”

The air to which these words have been set is very simple, but it has always seemed to me inexpressibly beautiful and touching. Both the singer and the listener seemed to feel it so. A strange sadness stole over Susan’s mind—a dark shadow, boding presentiments, flitted before her eyes, and she said not a word of praise, or approbation.

Florence jumped up, and cried lightly—
“ Well, Susan, how do you like my love ditty?” but when Susan raised her eyes, the eyes of her companion were streaming with tears.

“ Don’t look so scared, Susan—it is nothing,” she said, laughing; “ the song is a favourite,

as I told you, but it always harrows up my soul to sing it." She came and sat down at the table on which Susan's work-frame rested, and leaning her head on both her hands, continued—" You must not think that there were any personal allusions in my song—I have vague feelings that I shall be very much in love some day, but I never have felt it yet. When I do, I am sure I shall be very unhappy, and so these melancholy love songs please me—that is all." She turned over two or three books that lay on the table, then again looking full at Susan, went on—" It is rather curious, don't you think so, Susan, that I should never have been in love, and here I am nearly twenty?"

" Well, Florence, I really don't know," Susan replied, after a little thought; " is it very curious?"

" There's hardly a girl in London of my age that can say the same—that is, of my standing, for I have been out four years; I came out at sixteen, because I *would*. I could tell you such melancholy tales that have been confided to me, but I am afraid they would

not interest you, and so I will reserve them for better listeners."

"And how comes it then, Florence, that you are such a wonderful exception?" asked Susan, smilingly.

"Because I am fastidious, Susan—not for want of *opportunities*, as people call them. It is a sad thing, and I wish it was not so, for I should be much happier if I was married; but somehow nobody pleases me. I always find fault; if people are clever, they are either dry or precise, or too ugly to look at; and if they are handsome, they are stupid or vulgar; or if they are both handsome and clever, they are conceited, and think too much of themselves; or, if there really is no fault to find, and I must allow them to be agreeable, still there is a want of enthusiasm, or something or other, which keeps me from really liking them; and so here I am, after having seen more of the world than most girls, and after having heard no end of pretty speeches, as I told you before, in the sad predicament of the miller, 'caring for nobody, no, not I, and nobody caring for me.'" She spoke lightly, but an expression of deep sadness stole over her features.

"It is to come, Florence," said Susan, kindly.

"Which, Susan—love or marriage? They won't go together with me." She got up and stood listlessly before the long looking-glass, twining her dark curls in her fingers. "I know," she continued, "how it will be, as well as if my life was written down in that book. I shall end by marrying a poor, good, dull, respectable man, whom I have already refused twice; who really does care for me, I believe, poor soul, though I can't say that I return his feelings in the smallest degree. That will be the end, and, perhaps, the best end after all. Love is nothing but a burden, I dare say."

"You speak only to shock me, I am sure, Florence," Susan said, gravely. With a slight smile, she added, "But I don't wish you to suppose that I am shocked whenever you attempt to shock me. I am much more *sorry* to hear you speak in this way—sorry for your sake."

"I don't speak to shock you, Susan, I assure you; I speak just as I feel. But now let us

have done. How fine it looks out there! Can't we take a walk before luncheon?—do come, Susan."

"I will come in half an hour, if you can wait till then."

"Half an hour! Why not now? I am not at all in a waiting mood to-day."

"I am very sorry, Florence, but it must be half an hour."

"Oh, well! must is for the king, as they tell children, and you are king here, so I must obey; but pray give me a novel, or something to pass the time away, for I am not at all fond of my own company."

"Here are a good many novels," said Susan, approaching a bookcase.

"Walter Scott's! My dear Susan, that won't do. You might as well set me down to history at once."

"And would that be a very dreadful punishment?" she inquired, smiling.

"Not always, but now it would. I read history in the winter, when I am sober—never in the summer. I dare say you think I have enough to make me sober now; but you know

there is melancholy as well as lively madness; and though I am sad enough, I am in no mood for sober studies. No; pray give me something heart-rending, to raise my spirits a little."

Susan directed her attention to a table on which some books belonging to Julian were lying, and then left her. From one strange, excitable, restless being, she was going to another, but the faults so clearly seen in one case were somewhat hidden in the other—and not only hidden to the eyes of Susan . . . There was a softness and a charm about Julian, even in his selfishness and petulance, which Miss Vere often wanted; and, in fact, though in many ways alike, Julian's was the weaker but the better nature too.

She knocked softly at the door of the library where Julian sat, and entered the room with some timidity. She was not in the habit of going in search of him. He was sitting at the library-table, with a pen in his hand, and, spread around the open blotting-book, were innumerable shreds of paper.

He looked up as Susan approached, and

leaned back in his chair. "So, you are come at last, Susan. I thought you had quite forsaken me."

"I hoped you would have come to us," she replied, gently.

"Not to *us*. Once for all, understand me, Susan, I don't like Miss Vere—I don't like her manners, I don't admire her beauty—I don't like anything about her."

"Then am I never to see you, Julian, because Florence is here?"

"That must be as you please, Susan. I can't dictate to you. If you prefer Miss Vere's company to mine, I suppose that will be the consequence."

"But, dear Julian, only consider. Do you think it would be right or kind for me to neglect Florence. She is not happy. Don't you feel, that at any rate, just at first, I ought to try and make her feel at home at Keevor?"

"I don't doubt that you are right, Susan; I dare say you are. I only speak of what the consequences must be."

She said no more, but leant over the table and examined the pieces of paper that were

lying about it. They were scraps, fragments of poetry, all unfinished, began, and thrown aside again.

"Are these yours, Julian?" she asked, as her eye glanced from one to the other. "I ought not to be sorry that you have passed the morning alone, if these are the fruits of your solitude."

"Don't be glad," he replied, mournfully. "I hardly ever write when I am happy."

And the fragments bore the traces of a dissatisfied mind—all were melancholy—all alluding more or less to the sadness of life.

One piece was lying before him still wet. It was the only finished one, and was in a slightly different tone to the others. Susan took it up and read it. It was entitled :

TO SUMMER.

Sweet Summer, stay—be not so swift of wing,
Stay yet awhile to glad us with thy shining,
Scarce have we owned thy perfect blossoming,
And wilt thou haste so swift to thy declining?

 Oh, stay awhile,
 To gild the clouded earth with thy sweet smile.

Stay, with the glory of thy sunny sky,
The yet more marvellous glory of thy night,
Far as the eye can pierce or fancy fly,
The deep blue vault unclouded, starred with light.
Beam on us still,
What sight like thine our earth-bound eyes can fill !

Stay, with thy breath so soft and calmly sweet,
The morning's freshness and the dewy even,
Bearing upon its lightly-sandal'd feet
Ten thousand odours from the fresh fields given.
Oh, stay, yet stay,
To bless the glad, and drive dark dreams away.

Stay, with thy flowery garland rich and bright,
Studding like gems the deep wood's foliage green,
The varying rose hues, and the lilies light,
The wild-eyed scarlet, and the blue serene.
We bid thee stay,
Our hearts refuse to let them fade away.

By pastures green as thine, waters as clear,
We would for ever walk, but may not now,
Sweet Summer, though thy days have been so fair,
Their radiant course must cease, has ceased to flow,
And Autumn's breath
Bears thy bright garlands to a lasting death.

With deep desire we drink thy beauty in,
Another Summer bright as thine might come,
And glad our eyes, and our hearts' blessing win,
But thou wilt pass to thine eternal tomb,
And sadly swell
Our hearts to bid their first and last farewell.

She laid it down, and looked at him.

“Was it *this* summer that you meant, Julian,” she inquired.

“Yes; I grieve to see it go. I never, Susan, never shall be as happy as I have been again.”

She felt it too: the same presentiment was upon her mind, and she could not argue with his fears; but she stooped towards him, and said, in her soft, sweet voice,—

“It may be so, Julian; the future is not in our power, but the present is—why will you not try and enjoy the present, which is given us to enjoy.” He looked up, touched by her earnest, pleading gaze. She went on: “I have promised Florence to walk with her this morning—dear Julian, will you conquer your dislike, and come with us? I think it would make you happier yourself; but if not, will you do it to please me?”

He did conquer himself so far as to go with them, but not sufficiently so as to throw off his ill-humour. It could, perhaps, scarcely be expected. Few victories are so difficult to gain as the thorough victory over a fit of

temper ; the very act of trying to overcome it makes its bondage to be felt the more. They walked in silence. Julian was sullen; Florence, with more excuse, was haughty. She was accustomed to be the first; accustomed to attention, admiration, and flattery. Perhaps Julian's decided aversion was less unpleasing to her than total indifference would have been; but it certainly was galling, and she responded to it with the coldness and pride of pique.

CHAPTER XV.

Hark ! how it floats upon the dewy air,
O, what a dying, dying close was there !
'Tis harmony from yon sequestered bower,
Sweet harmony that soothes the midnight hour.
Long ere the charioteer of day had run
His morning course the enchantment was begun ;
And he shall gild yon mountain's height again,
Ere yet the pleasing toil becomes a pain.

COWPER.

JULIAN'S ill-humour continued for three days and two nights. I was thoroughly weary of *it*, and out of patience with *him*. Aunt Janet, too, after at first enjoying it, began to miss the good-temper with which he had formerly received her observations and courted her conversation ; and she became, in consequence, considerably more snappish and unpleasant in her remarks, especially to poor

Susan. The only one whose patience never failed, was hers who was most severely tried; whose days were passed in attempts to adjust the rights and claims of the two who seemed to hang upon her for their happiness, and yet who perversely refused to assist her in her endeavours to make them happy. But Susan's patience was founded on higher principles than kindness to Florence or love to Julian; for hers was the charity that "suffereth long and is kind, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and therefore never faileth."

This state of things was at last ended by Miss Vere herself.

On the third evening we were all sitting together, this same incompatibility of society weighing on our spirits, when Florence suddenly rose and walked to the pianoforte. She had hitherto resolutely refused to sing in Julian's presence, and Susan looked up and smiled her gratitude at this change of temper and relaxation of her obstinacy.

Miss Vere opened the pianoforte, looked over her music, placed a song upon the desk,

then, with perfect gravity, walked across the room and stood by Julian's chair. He was indolently occupied in destroying sheet after sheet of letter-paper, by portraying a series of ferocious-looking Turks in turbans, and with fuming pipes in their mouths,—all bearing a striking resemblance to himself. I don't know what the particular charm of a Turk's head may be, but I have often observed that it is a satisfactory vent for ill-humour.

"Mr. Julian Greville," said Miss Vere, coldly, and without moving a muscle of her countenance, "I am going to sing, and I invite you to sing with me. I am not in the habit of being refused."

Julian looked up, stared, laughed, and followed her without a word, to the pianoforte. In the same way, he would, I believe, have followed to the world's end,—her or any other person who *commanded* him to follow them. I often regretted that, from Susan's love and her natural gentleness of manner, her requests were so seldom enforced with the weight of a command.

Miss Vere sat down and began at once,

silently pointing out to Julian the line from whence she started, and the line at which she wished to make an end.

They began—and still in the lonely day, and in the silence of night the wonderful harmony of their united voices falls upon my memory soft, rich, and melodious as it first greeted my astonished, entranced, enraptured ear. They were both finished masters of the art of singing—all that teaching can do, and it can do much, had been done for them; and in addition they had the melody of voice, and the depth of feeling which teaching alone can never give. The peculiarity of their voices added to the beauty of the music. Florence's, as I before mentioned, was a contralto—Julian's was a tenor; each voice, as it has been prettily said, borrowing its beauty from the other, and the union of the two made such a concord of sweet sounds as words are too poor to describe.

I was so carried away by my delight, that it was not until the clamorous ending with which, as it appears to me, the Italian composers ruin too many of their most beautiful

pieces, that I turned to observe the effect of the music upon Susan. I almost dreaded to read upon her brow the symptoms of annoyance, if not of jealousy. But far was Susan from such earthborn thoughts! She was sitting, as I had done, rapt, entranced, her earnest eyes resting upon the singers, her heart beating with the strange emotions and aspirations which the unequalled beauty of the sounds excited.

The voices ceased—with a slight sigh of pleasure, (after all, a sigh is the expression of intensity of enjoyment,) she turned to Aunt Janet, who sat knitting beside her.

“This *is* music, is it not, Aunt Janet?”
Aunt Janet was one of those who have no music in their souls. Shakspeare would have had but a poor opinion of her, for although he says—

“There’s nought so stockish, hard, and full of rage,
But music for the time doth change his nature;”

he would have been at fault as far as she was concerned. She sat prim and demure during the song; dropping her stitches, picking them

up again, audibly counting, and soliloquizing at every blunder she made, and to Susan's remark, she merely replied, drily—

“Very sweet, indeed, my dear Susan. You had better take care, or she will sing his heart away.”

I started at her expression of a thought which had passed, almost too swiftly to be observed, through my own mind. But by Susan it was unnoticed, or at least it seemed to be unnoticed. No shadow crossed her brow, and a moment afterwards she went to attend to her father while he made his evening's mess with tea and cake, without a single glance towards the pianoforte.

Susan had scarcely left her place before Florence returned to it, sat down, and taking up Susan's work put in a few stitches, and then unpicked them again.

A discussion had, I suppose, commenced at the pianoforte; I only heard the conclusion. Julian approached her, and drew a chair to the opposite side of the table.

“One more, Miss Vere—I only ask for one more?”

"No thank you," she replied, coldly. "I don't mean to sing any more to-night."

"Why so capricious?" he said, with a smile, but with some annoyance.

"I might ask you the same question," she said, quietly; and turning to Aunt Janet, began laughingly to inquire how many stitches she had dropt that evening.

Julian pushed back his chair, and returning to his own seat, commenced a fresh portraiture of a Turk's head, with a most appalling expression of countenance, on a sheet of foolscap; but Susan approached him, laughed at his heads, and talked of the music, and the sheet was turned over, and the evening finished with a pretty sketch of an angel and a child.

Miss Vere's reluctance to sing again was overcome on the following morning. She had felt a simple, and perhaps not unnatural, desire to punish Julian; and having made him feel her displeasure, and exercised a little power, she was not disposed to carry her resentment any further. They began to sing an hour or two after breakfast; and for three

successive days the sound of their united voices might be heard, never ending, still beginning. I will hurry on to the end of the three days.

Susan was summoned from the drawing-room, where she sat listening and unnoticed, to give her opinion on some important point which was under discussion between her father and Marshall. She must have been uneasy enough in heart, not from jealous feelings for herself, but from anxious ones for Julian; but she gave to her father her usual earnest and undivided attention. They had been the rounds of the garden, and she was standing by the side of a large flower-bed, when Aunt Janet approached her, and beckoned her away.

Susan quietly followed to a little distance. "I tell you what, Susan," said Aunt Janet; "you are a fool. Allow this singing to go on for another day, and I give you warning, that young lady will sing Julian's heart away."

A faint blush passed over Susan's face, but she replied steadily, "I know you mean kindly, Aunt Janet; but I cannot allow such

things to be said to me;" and she turned away and retraced her steps to the flower-bed.

"A wilful woman must have her way," cried Aunt Janet, loudly; "but remember I have done my duty—don't say that I gave you no warning."

While she spoke, Julian darted from the window of the drawing-room, and approached the flower-bed, where the group were standing. His brows were contracted—his countenance dark and troubled.

"Marshall was right, Susan," Mr. Greville was saying; "we have lost our roses; but see how bright the geraniums are. Our garden is as sweet and gay as ever it was."

"Not to me," Julian said, in a gloomy voice. "I regret the roses still."

It was the weariness of over-indulgence which was oppressing him. That which to him should have been but a passing amusement, he had allowed to occupy his time, to fill his mind, to intrench upon his most sacred duty; and for the time, the excitement of novelty was passed, and remorse and weariness were stealing over and oppressing his mind.

"Will you walk with me to-night, Julian," Susan asked, in her gentle voice. He was come to her to allay the fever of his mind; she felt it, and responded at once to the unspoken call.

He gratefully accepted the offer, and they set off together across the meadows that lay before the house.

When they returned from their walk, Julian was himself again—his eye was bright, his brow serene, his countenance full of light and life—he was loving to Susan, attentive to Mr. Greville, kind and playful to Aunt Janet—he was once again the Julian whose first arrival at Keevor had gladdened all our hearts; and as I watched him, the weight which had been hanging over my mind for the last week was removed. I saw that it must be a hard and a toilsome task to bring that restless nature to strength and principle; but if she did not faint under the burden, I felt that Susan would conquer at last. Her influence was powerful still—her sweet voice strong to control and soothe his harshest mood.

But the fault of moral weakness, and weak-

ness of character and principle in general is, that it is always in extremes. Total abstinence is the only strength of a weak mind, as moderation is the virtue of a strong one; and the former being often too violent a remedy for the occasion, is apt to be as dangerous as the other extreme, excess.

I suppose none but singers and passionate lovers of their art can tell how great is the fascination that lies in the perfect union of two voices. Julian had certainly felt its fascination; but in his fit of remorse acknowledging that there was danger in the indulgence of his taste, he, full of good intentions, had resolved to indulge himself no more; and as at this time Miss Vere's sole attraction to him was in her voice, (for though she amused his excitable mind, she in many ways offended his refined and fastidious taste,) the consequence of his resolution was total neglect.

Determinations made solely from excitement, in excitement are usually broken again. Miss Vere could not be otherwise than piqued at the caprice of Julian's conduct. She was not accustomed to be taken up and put down

at pleasure, and her pride would have risen against it, if depression and melancholy had not rather caused it to affect her spirits. I pitied her, for I could not but feel that to an ardent unoccupied mind Keevor must be something of a prison-house.

Susan devoted herself with her unfailing kindness to her cousin, but Susan, as perhaps my readers have discovered, was not what could be called an *amusing* companion. Agreeable, I think, she was, as they must be who, to great charm of manner and sweetness of voice, unite a thoughtful intelligent mind, and a ready sympathy with the thoughts and feelings of others; but she was reserved and retiring, and, in short, she did not possess that ease and lightness of conversation which is sometimes a natural, sometimes only an acquired gift—and it was this that Florence required.

One afternoon Julian suddenly entered the drawing-room, and found Miss Vere alone. She was sitting idly and dreamily in the window, her eyes wandering about the garden. A pensive look was very becoming to her.

Some admired her animation, but to me there was a peculiar attraction in her beauty when under the softening influence of melancholy.

Julian paused to look at her—her attitude was the same which Susan had once admired.—he admired it now—he approached her.

“ You are very thoughtful, Miss Vere.”

“ Not thoughtful, only bored—or if bored is not a proper expression, I am a prey to ennui.” She laughed as she spoke, but her countenance retained its melancholy.

“ Do you find Keevor very dull?” Julian inquired.

“ I don’t blame Keevor, I only blame myself—it is, I have no doubt, my own fault if I find Time a great enemy.” She paused, then went on more gaily, and rather mischievously. “ I suppose your temper is so even, and your mind so well regulated, that you don’t know what it is to feel depressed and wretched, and yet to have no satisfactory reason to give for it.”

“ You don’t suppose any such thing,” he said, playfully. He stood for a moment looking at her, then added, “ I am sorry you think us all so dull and stupid.”

She looked up and laughed—her spirits were rising. “Oh! I did not say that—I think you all very clever, but you know to the dull, cleverness becomes exceedingly like dulness; and I am dull. My governess always told me so. Whenever I said I had nothing to do, she said that could only be the complaint of an idiot. We used to battle the point every Sunday regularly, because I always said so on Sunday, and in those days I never would allow I was dull; now I will agree with anybody who tells me so.” The shade stole over her face again.

Julian stood looking at her without speaking.

“The fact is,” she continued, “that I don’t like a quiet life; I dare say excitement is very bad—people tell me so, but I like it—it is only in excitement that I feel to live.”

“That is exactly like me,” Julian said, folding his arms and leaning against the shutter, opposite to her. “Give me excitement,—I don’t want dissipation, I hate it, but give me something to think about, something to feel, and I am happy. Give me even

misery itself, and I had rather feel it than the tameness of mere existence."

"No, Mr. Greville, I can't follow you there," Florence said, shaking her head; "I cannot say that I wish to be unhappy"—and swift as she spoke, a large tear fell from her eye.

"My dear Florence, you *are* unhappy," he exclaimed. She laughed, shook her head, and got up from her seat, but he stopped her as she was moving away.

"Don't stay at home, this fine day. I have promised to meet Susan at five—it must be nearly that time—let us go together."

She consented but too willingly. It was then four o'clock. They wandered away together, and although Susan had been detained, and was half an hour after her time, they did not complain.

That evening the singing was renewed.

CHAPTER XVI.

Twist ye, twist ye, even so,
Mingle shades of joy and woe,
Hope and fear, and peace and strife,
In the thread of human life.

GUY MANNERING.

I WAS forced about this time to leave Keevor for three weeks. My business was chiefly of a private nature, but before my return I was to remain in London for a few days, in order more satisfactorily to answer some puzzling questions which had arisen, with respect to the marriage settlements of Julian and Susan.

During my absence I heard nothing from Keevor. At the time of my departure I had not felt quite easy as to the general aspect of affairs, and absence is a strange magnifier of ill. In the course of my last day's journey so many vague fears and presentiments filled my

mind, that I believe there were few misfortunes whose announcement would have startled me on my arrival. That nothing very uncommon had happened, the aspect of the house, and of the servants, soon assured me; yet still it was with a beating and an anxious heart that I entered the drawing-room.

How cold and calm is reality compared to the terrors of our imaginations. As I opened the door and looked around me, I felt as if I had entered the abode of peace. It was evening, for I had left London at a late hour. Mr. Greville was sleeping in his chair, Susan sat working on the sofa, and on a chair beside her, Florence was sitting, bending over a music-book which lay upon the table. Aunt Janet was knitting, and at the farther end of the room stood Julian and George Vivian at an open window, engaged in deep conversation. The latter had only returned a few hours before me. "All is well," I internally said, with a sigh of relief, and warmly returned the affectionate pressure of Susan's hand, as she came to meet me with a sweet smile of welcome.

When I had detailed the scattered fragments of news which were expected of a traveller, I extricated myself from my companions, and sat down for my usual and favourite employment of observation. Something I felt there must be to be read, some emotions under this calm exterior. From the countenances of Julian and Miss Vere I received little food for thought—they were much as they had been when I last parted from them. Julian was not, perhaps, in his highest spirits, but there was no gloom on his brow; he was evidently well pleased to have George Vivian again; but in the countenances of both Susan and Mr. Vivian I found matter for reflection and speculation. George Vivian was much changed. He looked like one from whose mind some heavy weight had suddenly been removed: who had suddenly broken from a galling chain, and who was rejoicing in his freedom. Grave he looked and thoughtful; there was no return to the fresh free spirit of his boyhood and his youth—that was not to be hoped for—

Not in our dreams, not even in our dreams,
May we return to that sweet land of youth,
That home of hope, and innocence, and truth.

But though grave and serious, still he appeared to be at peace; his countenance brightened, and was not followed by the contraction which reproved the brightness; he smiled, and you did not feel that it was like a sun ray over a withered flower. From a bondage as dark and dreary as that of the prisoner of Chillon, he had returned to the light of day, and he had returned while yet there was life and mental power to use, and, perhaps, in a certain sense, to enjoy. "And this is your work," I said, and turned to her whose gentle words had been as the falling dew to the blighted flower; and then my gaze rested upon her serene brow, and I asked myself if its peace was such as it was wont to be. On this question I pondered long, and the more I pondered the more certain did I feel that all was not as it should have been. I could not say that she was disturbed; there was no restlessness or uncertainty

in her movements, but there was a certain fixed gravity on her brow which was not usual—it was not sadness—it was not seriousness—these I had often seen; it was gravity, the gravity of one who was pondering deeply but calmly on some matter of profound interest. Again, when Julian once or twice addressed Miss Vere, she raised her eyes—not quickly, not with a heightened colour—but steadily, glanced at them with a grave gaze of inquiry, and bent over her work again. None but those who watched as I watched, who loved her as I loved, would perhaps have traced so much of thought and feeling in her face. I am persuaded that to most of the party she was the same Susan whom they had been accustomed to see.

One inquiry I made of Miss Janet Greville, as she was folding up her knitting at bed time—"How have you passed your time, Miss Janet, during my absence?"

"There has been a conspiracy to destroy the tympanum of my ears," she replied, drily; "that's all."

Her answer sent me thoughtfully to bed.

I was busy the day after my arrival, and, except at breakfast, I saw but little of any of the party; the little I did see interested and excited me, but led me to no definite conclusion. Julian had then been thoughtful, and Susan still watchful and grave; but in so short a time I could not gather wherefore. Something more I guessed from Miss Vere's animated and sparkling beauty, and a look of intense anxiety on the countenance of George Vivian; but again I could only ask wherefore, for I saw but little.

I was the first of the party who appeared in the drawing-room before dinner. The family were later than usual. I had reason to suppose that something had occurred to detain them, and I took up a book and placed myself at the window to read.

I had been so engaged for a few minutes, when Miss Vere suddenly appeared at the window, returning from the garden. She was dressed for the evening; a light shawl only was thrown over her shoulders, and a garland of wild looking flowers was twined in her hair.

"Is this wise, Miss Vere?" I said, for the evening, though fine, was chilly.

"I never think about wisdom," she replied, gaily. "Have you not discovered that before now? I have been adorning myself, like a mermaid, in the open air, and I hope you think I have adorned myself to some purpose."

"I certainly do," I said, with a smile, for I could not deny that she looked very lovely.

"I dressed early," she continued, "and then wandered as far as the wood; but there my attention was arrested by the sound of a carriage, and the ringing of a bell—so I wended my way backward—and now, neither to the right nor to the left can I discover the traces of any such interesting event as the arrival of a stranger. Can you enlighten me? Has anything happened?"

"I also heard a carriage and a bell, but I know no more."

"Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Grantley, that you have actually remained here in calm ignorance?"

"If anything of any importance has hap-

pened, I shall know it in good time," I said, quietly.

She shook her head at me in mingled surprise and contempt, and I expected her to leave the room on a voyage of discovery for herself; but I was mistaken. She threw off her shawl, and came and stood with me in the window.

"So Susan has two lovers in the house, Mr. Grantley," she observed, after a short meditation.

"Has she?" I said, a little startled by her exclamation; yet I, on that day, had made the same discovery.

"Yes; I found that out before Mr. Vivian had been many hours, I might say one hour, in the house."

"You are very acute, Miss Vere."

"I am," she said; "I have often been told so. But don't you think, Mr. Grantley, that it is a sad pity, when destiny was arranging Susan's fate, that it did not bestow her upon Mr. Vivian? He would have made a far more suitable husband."

"Destiny," I said, gravely, "is far wiser

than to accommodate itself to our ignorant notions of what is suitable." And so indeed I felt; for though in the early part of the day I had allowed Miss Vere's idea to fill my mind, further thought had suggested to me, that if Julian's restless nature was to be steadied and tamed, it must be by the love and patience of such an one as Susan. She only, as I fancied, at least, could lead him into the land of uprightness.

" You need not be so grave, Mr. Grantley," Miss Vere said, I thought, petulantly.

I made no answer; and in a moment she spoke again, gaily. " Well, well, what are these good people doing? Why don't you go and see what is the matter, Mr. Grantley?"

" Nay, Miss Vere, it is not for me to pry into the affairs of my superiors. But here is Miss Janet, perhaps she can satisfy you."

" Aunt Janet! what *has* happened?" exclaimed Miss Vere.

" I am not at liberty to say," she replied, in a stately manner, as she passed on to the further end of the room. I may wrong her, but my firm persuasion has ever been, that she

was as ignorant as ourselves, and at that moment dying with curiosity.

Miss Vere wandered restlessly about the room, arranged her garland at the looking-glass, turned over some books, finally, with an expression of weariness, threw herself on the sofa, and taking up a newspaper, began to read.

Almost immediately afterwards, Susan appeared—her colour was a little heightened, her eye a little brighter—the look of fixed gravity was gone.

“What *is* the matter, Susan?” Miss Vere said, impatiently; “what *has* kept you all to-night?”

“I have been twice to your room to look for you, Florence, but I could not find you or hear of you.” She sat down by her on the sofa, and continued:—“I am afraid you will be surprised, and shocked, at the news that has arrived. A messenger came from Rome to B——, this afternoon, bringing the account of Lord Mortimer’s death.”

“Dead!” exclaimed Miss Vere; “my poor guardian,” and her eyes filled with tears. A

moment afterwards, however, volatile as a child, the tears were dashed away, and a smile of amusement playing over her face, she said, "And so Mr. Mortimer is now My Lord. I wonder how he will support the honour." She paused again, then turning suddenly to Susan, "But how came the news to be brought here—none of you knew Lord Mortimer, did you?"

"Very little," Susan said. "The news was brought here by Lord Mortimer's election agent, with a request that Julian would stand for the county."

"Ah! of course, Mr. Mortimer must give it up. What an excellent idea! What does Julian say?"

"Julian is very much pleased, and most willing to consent. The messenger brought two letters from Mr. Mortimer; one, a kind of farewell to his constituents, and another addressed to Julian, pressing him to declare himself immediately, before the news of Lord Mortimer's death got abroad. Mr. Mortimer says, that in writing the very day of his father's death, he was only obeying his last orders."

"I dare say—how like Lord Mortimer!" Miss Vere said, laughing. "I don't think there ever was such a thorough bigoted old Whig. He never would believe that a Tory could have a single virtue—certainly not a spark of honesty. I have no doubt this election was his last thought. I have no doubt he smiled over his acuteness and good management. Well, I like the idea extremely." And her face was glowing with animation when Julian and Mr. Painter, the election-agent, entered the room together.

She immediately called to Julian to offer her congratulations, and Susan got up from the sofa to speak to Mr. Painter. He was a little, meek-looking man, with his head a little on one side, and a small voice. His appearance was very unlike that of a man of business; but from the estimation in which his talents in that line were held, I have no doubt that he was one of those who "in little body shrine a mighty mind."

He began to speak to Susan with much importance.

"Yes, Miss Greville, there is no time to be

lost. In affairs of this nature time is everything. Lord Mortimer's thoughtfulness—I mean the late Lord's—cannot sufficiently be praised; and, indeed, his Lordship, the present Lord, has also acted in a most becoming and satisfactory manner. With time for our helpmate, the game, I may, I hope, confidently say, is in our own hands. Nothing can be more satisfactory than the appearance of matters as they now stand."

"I think you said the election could not take place immediately."

"True, Miss Greville; but Mr. Julias must not presume upon that. His address must be out in as short a time as possible, and there is not a moment to be lost before his canvass begins. Mr. Julias, however, makes no objection to any of my suggestions; he promises to act in a most satisfactory manner. I ventured to say a word in favour of diligence, industry, and perseverance. Nothing to be done in this world, Miss Greville, without perseverance. I believe, however, that my admonitions are not needed. Mr. Julias speaks in a most satisfactory manner. Indeed, as matters

stand, I may say all our prospects are satisfactory."

When George Vivian entered the room, he approached Susan, and said, with the affectionate interest of a brother, "You are pleased, Miss Greville, at the thought of Julian's prospects."

"Very much pleased," she said, with a smile.

"You are right, I am sure; employment will be good for him. But for yourself," and he looked at her, "shall you easily be reconciled to a London life?"

"Do you think I am so wedded to my own ways?" she said, almost gaily.

He shook his head and smiled, and retreated. Later in the evening Julian sat down to compose his address, and desired Susan to write to his dictation. He could not please himself, and with his usual wastefulness, tore up sheet after sheet of paper. Aunt Janet approached to remonstrate, and with her the rest of the party assembled round the table, with the exception of Mr. Greville and myself.

"Susan, how can you allow such wilful waste—it is sinful, Mr. Julian, positively sinful. Look now!" And she stretched out her sharp thin finger to the pile of torn paper which lay upon the table.

"What is your favourite economy, Julian?" asked Miss Vere, playfully; "they say we all have some natural ingrained stinginess."

"I don't know," he replied; "what shall it be, Mr. Painter? I will be for cutting down something furiously, but you must direct my good intentions to their proper subject."

"Indeed, Mr. Julian, if I may be allowed to suggest, a proper mention of economy in your address will be attended with a most satisfactory effect."

"Very well.—Now Susan, take a new bit of paper, and I will begin again."

"But you can't plunge into economy at once," she said, smiling.

"Then I must leave it for the present. I will get up in the night and write—that will be the best—all my finest thoughts are after midnight. I promise you, Mr. Painter, something very sublime before morning."

"What are your political principles, Julian," inquired Miss Vere. "Do you know, I never gave you credit for being a Whig; I have hitherto lived under the painful impression that you were a Tory."

"My principles are of a mixed kind," he said, laughingly; "if you wish for a name for them I think they may be called 'Conservative Radical.'"

"Conservative Radical," repeated Mr. Painter, musingly—then gently inclining his head, observed, "very satisfactory."

"I am for upholding the monarchy and the aristocracy, and the church, and all the old institutions of the country, but I am for a thorough radical reform of all corruptions."

And again Mr. Painter remarked, "Very satisfactory."

"There is nothing very new in your political creed," said George Vivian, smiling.

"Ah! that is because you have only heard my broad statement—you will be a little startled when you come to particulars, and I beg you will be in my room at half-past twelve precisely, to give me your opinion on

my address. Mr. Painter, I should like to have some more conversation with you; there are one or two points on which I am a little in the dark. My opinions incline to both sides of the question." And putting his arm within Mr. Painter's, he retired to the other end of the room.

CHAPTER XVII.

How oft are we constrained to appear
With other countenance than that we owe,
And be ourselves far off when we are near.
How oft are we forced, on a cloudy heart
To set a shining face and make it clear,
Seeming content to put ourselves apart,
As if we only were composed by art,
Not Nature.

DANIEL.

And will she love thee as well as I?
Will she do for thee what I have done?
See all the pomps of the world pass by,
And look only to thee, Beloved one.

Song.

FOR a week nothing could exceed Julian's excitement and delight in his prospects. Everything went on, as Mr. Painter expressed it, in a most satisfactory manner. His reception at the first meeting of his leading sup-

porters was flattering; his manners were winning, and there was no want of more sterling qualities to conciliate sterner critics. His address, well written, and, through George Vivian's influence, concise and to the point, had been commented upon in terms of admiration and approbation by some of the leading newspapers. His hopes of success were high, and his delight in his hopes still higher. He and George Vivian were absent, day after day, from Keevor; but when he returned at night, though wearied in body, his mind was so sunny, his manners so fascinating, his anecdotes so well told, his satire so stingless and playful, that every shade of suspicion vanished from my mind, and Susan's countenance lighted once more with all, and more than all, her former happiness.

But the misfortune (in Julian's history that hateful “but” must for ever occur) of those who have no fixed principles of duty to be their guide, is, that in the moments of discouragement and weariness which must attend upon all human pursuits and hopes, they have no support on which to lean, and from which,

in spite of tediousness, they can gather strength and spirit. Like the frail bark, they can but be the sport of every wind that passes over them. As was natural, he met with a few repulses;—the first flowing tide of success was interrupted—a lampoon of a bitter and personal character was posted up on the walls of the county town—(a circumstance rather flattering than otherwise, for it is not every one who is worth abusing)—in a wretched country paper his address was turned into ridicule—such were the trivial disasters which disturbed the evenness of his spirit; and immediately, on the very first disturbance, annoyances, scarcely felt before, began to press heavily; the weariness of the canvass, the hot rooms where he met his supporters, the irritating nature of the questions addressed to him—and, but for the unceasing exertions and persuasions of George Vivian, he would have retired from the contest in disgust.

During the days of novelty and excitement, Susain had once again been all in all to him. She it was who was never weary of listening to his hopes and plans—whose head was never

weary of his calculations—whose hand was ever employed in his service. List upon list was written and re-written, and corrected, and thrown aside, and again considered—and so on, hour after hour, and evening after evening—for that which occupied Julian's mind occupied him entirely; and still, with a patience far greater—with an interest equal to his own—Susan was by his side, fore-stalling every wish, smiling away every cloud, guiding and controlling every caprice, a portion of himself.

So it was for a week. With every evening's close, he returned with his hopeful smiles to her; but with the ruffling of his spirit, her bright day faded again into night.

The first symptoms of his ill-humour were shown characteristically enough.

He came home late. He had been detained at a meeting—a wearisome meeting, I have no doubt—and was forced to dress quickly, which was always displeasing to him. At dinner, he sat in profound gloom; spoke sharply to Aunt Janet, and answered, far from

patiently, poor Mr. Greville's irrelevant questions. When he entered the drawing-room, Susan was copying for her father a list of plants mentioned in the *Gardener's Chronicle*. Julian mistook it for one of his own hitherto much considered election lists; fancied she wished to force it upon his attention, and, like a child, was determined not to do that which was expected of him.

Without speaking, but with a petulant exclamation, he walked up to the table where she sat, drew the sheet hastily from under her hands, tore it in pieces, and crumpling it into a ball, tossed it into the fire.

A silence followed, such as usually follows an ebullition of temper; it was broken by Mr. Greville's gentle voice:

“I am sorry you did that, Julian; now poor Susan will have to write it all over again.”

“No, she won’t,” he replied, determinedly; “I don’t mean to have anything more of the sort.”

“But, Julian,” said the poor man, rising in

his chair, and speaking with some agitation, “I want it; she must write it again—she must, indeed.”

“Julian is not thinking of the flowers, papa,” Susan said, hastening to his side; “he thought it was one of his election papers. I will write it again, directly.” And turning to Julian, she shook her head at him with a smile, which should have thrown him on his knees before her.

He did follow her to her seat to apologize. “I am excessively sorry, Susan, that you should have the trouble of writing those tiresome names over again. But you really should not try my temper with the sight of things which it cannot bear. Don’t let me see anything like a list for the next three months. I tell you, beforehand, I can’t bear it.”

“Are you tired of the election, Julian?” she inquired, sadly. Somehow, her own hopes, Julian’s happiness and welfare, appeared to be bound up with these opening prospects.

“Sick of it, Susan! If George was not so determined, I should give it up to-morrow. I

could have committed suicide to-day while those fools were talking,—fools, every one of them, and George at the head."

He threw himself on a chair at a little distance, and closed his eyes. As usual, the ebullition had but ruffled him the more. He lay for about half-an-hour without speaking or moving. At length he raised himself, and, in rather an authoritative manner, desired Miss Vere to go and play.

She laughed, but obeyed. Unfortunately for Julian, his lightest wishes were commands to all who approached him.

As she played, his brow cleared. Hers was not the hand of David, but even such appeared to be the power of her music over his disturbed spirit.

He got up, after a short time, and joined her at the pianoforte. He refused to sing, but he sat by her side, and there he remained for the evening,—and not for that evening only.

I now saw, though probably in heightened colours, that which had taken place during my absence.

Day after day he went out wearily and returned in gloom. Notwithstanding the separation from Susan, which his canvass and other arrangements caused, he scarcely noticed her in the evenings of the day. Not willingly, but as by a fascination, he appeared to be drawn to Miss Vere's side. He sang with her, or more often plunged in thought, his face buried in his hands, he sat listening, while the soft rich notes of her voice fell upon his ear; or, again, hanging over her, while her fingers idly touched the keys, gazing into her lovely face, he would endeavour to catch fresh spirit and vigour from her animating and exciting conversation.

And we sat by,—I saw the look of watchful gravity steal again over Susan's brow, I saw the stealthy and indignant glances of Aunt Janet, I saw the seriousness of George Vivian; and yet we all were mute: we felt that one word spoken might dissolve the fading light of Susan's happiness into mist for ever.

Of Miss Vere's conduct I have said but little, although I had, before now, discovered

that she had allowed her restless affections to settle upon Julian. I do not wish to judge her severely—I am persuaded that it was at first unconsciously done, in the weariness and idleness of an unsettled mind; I am certain that when she became conscious of it, that, as the phrase is, “she meant no harm”—I am persuaded that her own soul would have revolted from the idea of being a tempter. She did but follow where Julian led; when he neglected her, she was depressed, but she made no remonstrance; when he sought her society, she did but show what she felt, delight and gratitude. She thought not of the future, she considered not where her ways were leading her. She, I am persuaded, understood but little of the depth of Susan’s attachment for Julian; and if she looked onward at all, if for a moment her thoughts were cast forward, it was not forward into the present, but forward into the far future, where her mind rested in vague dreams that all would be right in the end, or in such vague visions as were excited by the idea of George Vivian’s secret love.

I may be thought to speak of her too leniently, but I do not think that her mind was naturally inclined to evil; and when I consider her youth and beauty—the trials of her orphan state—when I think of the temptations of an excited, restless mind, unsoftened and undisciplined by the education of a mother's love and care, I shrink from too harsh a judgment; I am willing rather to think of the palliations than to exaggerate her offence: and truly she needs excuse; for when all is said, how fearfully perverted must have been the sense of right in that mind which could in any way assist in withdrawing the love and duty of her betrothed husband from her cousin, her friend, from one who had met her and tended her with all, and more than all, a sister's love and care. Truly she needs excuse; and if I do not harshly judge, it is but because I rather grieve over the weakness and frailty of humanity.

It was rather more than a fortnight after Mr. Painter's first arrival, that Susan was returning one afternoon slowly and thought-

fully from the village. There was a kind of epidemic prevailing at the time, especially among children, and Susan went daily with her soft words and gentle cares to brighten the eyes of the young invalids, and to raise the spirits of the anxious, wearied parents. She had stood this day in many a house of anxiety and mourning; but it was not the thoughts of that which she had left behind which made her step so languid, and knit her young brow with such intense thoughtfulness —she was pondering on a question which was as of life and death—life or death, not so much to her own, as to Julian's welfare and happiness.

She was roused by a quick, sharp step behind her, and a peremptory call from Aunt Janet. She stood still till she joined her.

"Have you been to see any of those poor little children, Aunt Janet?" she then inquired.

"Not I, Susan. I have other things to think of. As to 'poor little children,' too, in that melancholy tone, I should be ashamed to fret about them; as I was telling Mrs.

Thomas to-day, what can children do better, pray, than to die?"

Susan smiled a sad, musing smile, but she said nothing, and they walked on together towards the house.

"I have been to call on Mrs. Gibbs," Aunt Janet remarked, after a short pause, in a voice which was intended to announce that Mrs. Gibbs had said something important. The lady in question was a widow of a sea captain—the gossip of the village, and a protégée of Miss Janet Greville's.

"I suppose she is very much excited about the election?" Susan inquired, to satisfy her companion.

"Excited, yes! I suppose she is—all fools are; and she's excited about something else, too. Let me tell you, Susan, the doings at Keevor are not so secret as you suppose," and Aunt Janet nodded her head emphatically.

"What doings?" Susan asked, almost fearfully, while a blush rose upon her cheek.

"What doings? Now, my dear Susan, don't pretend not to understand me—why, Mr. Julian's doings and Miss Florence's

doings. I tell you, I heard of them from Mrs. Gibbs."

The blush faded away. Susan asked no more.

"Once before, Susan," Aunt Janet continued, "I spoke to you. I warned you of how it would be; but I was not attended to. I told you she would sing his heart away from you. And who was right, I wonder? Look at him now—who is Mr. Julian's companion?—to whom do his eyes wander when he comes home of an evening? What is his amusement—his pleasure—his occupation? Susan, you must be blind."

"I am not blind, Aunt Janet," she replied, in a low voice, and without raising her eyes from the ground.

"Then, Susan, if you are not blind, you are a simpleton, or something worse. It's no affair of mine; I'm not going to get married to Mr. Julian, thank goodness—a pretty life I should lead; but I can't help having my wits about me, and I can't alter my notions of what is right and proper exactly as Mr. Julian wishes. I say it never was proper

that a man should marry one woman, and be in love with another. It's no use to try and persuade me of it; and I give you warning, unless you look to it pretty soon, such will be the case here."

"It shall not be the case here," Susan said, gently and steadily.

"Well, I hope I'm wrong, that's all I can say; but it's no use hoping, for I'm right—as I always am, if people will attend to me. Don't say I gave you no warning. I saw how it would be from the very first night. I said then, 'she will sing his heart away.' Can you deny it, Susan? Didn't I tell you how it would be?"

She made no answer; she was walking thoughtfully on. They turned from the little path of the meadow into the garden, and as their feet rested upon the gravel-walk, the tones of those well-known sweet united voices were wafted by a breath of air to the place where they stood.

Susan paused involuntarily and blushed deeply. She had supposed Julian to be with George Vivian, far away. In a moment, how-

ever, recovering herself, she was hurrying on, when Aunt Janet arrested her by a determined grasp of her arm.

"There's one thing more, Susan, that I wish to say, and that you must hear, and then I have done. Is this to go on, or is it not? I don't know what *you* think;—young people now-a-days have exceedingly strange ideas upon all points, and I don't see that a parade of religion and visiting the poor, and stuff, has a bit of effect in making them more particular in practice; but I confess that in my days I should have thought such attentions as Mr. Julian pays to Miss Florence extremely improper, considering that he is just the same as a married man; and I can tell you, Susan, notwithstanding all your fine ideas of education and example, that you are allowing a very scandalous example to be given to the house and the neighbourhood. What does Mrs. Gibbs say, do you suppose?—'I hear, Miss Janet, that the young gentleman does not quite know his own mind;' and I tell you, Susan, I didn't know which way to look when she said it, and that is not very usual with

me. Now, I have done; do just what you please, only don't say I gave you no warning."

Susan had raised her eyes from the ground, and her colour had risen deeper and deeper while Aunt Janet spoke—for, absorbed in thoughts of Julian's good and Julian's happiness, it had not struck her that other eyes and other minds were occupied in the same contemplations which engaged herself. As the forcible truth of Aunt Janet's words impressed themselves upon her mind, the last fading hope of a too enduring love gave up its being within her.

"Thank you for speaking to me, Aunt Janet," she said, after a moment's thought, in her sad sweet voice, "I will think of what you have been saying;" and turning away, she went quietly across the garden and into the house.

The song had ceased, and Julian, leaning with his arms upon the pianoforte, was talking in his eager, earnest manner as she entered the drawing-room. She paused a moment in the doorway. Julian's back was towards her, but Florence met her eyes at once, and a sudden

twinge of conscience made her blush deeply, and, for a moment, turn away her head.

It was, perhaps, some unconscious feeling of a like kind, which, when aware of her presence, prompted the petulant tone in which Julian addressed her—for the rebukes of conscience, which we will not hear ourselves, we are but too ready to inflict upon others.

“Where have you been, Susan?” he cried, in a loud, impatient voice; “Why are you never to be found? We have looked for you high and low, in and out of the house, but, of course, in vain. I wanted you to play. Florence cannot manage these new duets; but you always are out of the way when I wish for your presence.”

“I hardly hoped you would have been back so soon,” was all she said; but she closed the door, and came towards the pianoforte.

“You have been to that . . . village, I suppose,” he continued, in an irritated tone, and as if he could scarcely refrain from some abusive epithet. “I am sure I wish, with all my heart, that Keevor was at the bottom of the Red Sea.”

He meant, even in his petulance, he meant only the village of Keevor, and Susan knew it, but the words fell so painfully on her sad and awakened mind, that she turned away to conceal the momentary expression of emotion which she could not restrain.

She walked to a little distance and took off her bonnet, then returning to the pianoforte, inquired, if it was too late for her playing to be of use to them.

Ashamed and sorry for his ill-temper, Julian made no answer; but Florence spoke with unusual gentleness—thanked her for her offer, and, placing some music on the desk, pointed out the difficulties which she had been unable to overcome. Susan had often been applied to for her assistance when the vocal part was unusually intricate; for though but little of a musician, she had a quick eye for reading, and a ready power of accompanying. She sat down and began to play.

The singers followed, at first without interest—other thoughts were in their minds; but the music was beautiful; quickly the in-

spiration was caught, and, forgetful of all feelings but their own, they sang on and on.

I have sometimes thought that Susan's powers of self-command and self-control were injurious to her happiness. It was, perhaps, impossible that her two companions should understand or appreciate the strength and endurance which gave her power so calmly and patiently to follow their voices—

“ In many a bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out ;”

when every tone of linked sweetness was piercing to her heart. The unrestrained, though they are strangely influenced by it, can rarely measure the depths of unexpressed feeling.

They were satisfied at last, and Susan was released. As she rose from her seat, she stretched out her hand for her gloves, which were lying among the pieces of music on the pianoforte. In the movement, the bracelet which Julian had given her caught in one of the hooks of the desk, and fell with some

violence to the ground. He stooped to pick it up; and as he held it in his hand, some words lightly spoken on a former day recurred to his memory. "*If I ever see you without this bracelet, I shall know what to think—you will have given me up.*"

His hand shook as he clasped it again upon her arm.

"You have lost one of your lockets, Susan," exclaimed Miss Vere.

Susan looked down, and it was with a feeling of superstitious fear that she observed that the locket which contained Julian's hair, was missing. It would naturally seem that in moments of strong feeling, such trifling incidents could have little power to affect us; but it is precisely at such times that trifles, unobserved in careless hours, are gifted with a voice to speak. Susan felt as if the last link between her and Julian was severed, and she stood for a few unconscious instants gazing at the vacant place, as if it was a type of the coming void and desolation in her heart.

The locket had flown to a spot at some distance. There was a long search for it, and

in silence the search was made—not one sound or exclamation. The same thoughts were filling the breasts of all. It was found at length, and Julian took Susan's hand, and held it while he endeavoured to replace the locket on the bracelet in safety.

Susan stood with downcast eyes—she dared not speak, or raise her face from the ground, for she felt the trembling pressure of his hand, and the uncertain nervous movements of his fingers, as he endeavoured to perform his task, and in vain. It was perhaps but two minutes that she stood thus, but there are feelings under which two minutes are imbued with the life and power of years. It seemed as if her whole existence—hopes, fears, joys, sorrows, love, and disappointment, passed in vision before her eyes in the two silent minutes of that evening hour.

The silence was broken at length. "It is right now, Susan," Julian said, as he released her hand, in a voice so tender and so sad, that her strength could bear no more—without a look, without a word, she glided from the room.

As she passed hastily along the corridor,

she observed George Vivian and Mr. Painter approaching the house together on horseback. Julian had left his business, his duty, his occupation, to return to Keevor, and to return —to whom?

CHAPTER XVIII.

In midst of plenty only to embrace,
Calm patience is not worthy of your praise ;
But he that can look sorrow in the face
And not be daunted, he deserves the bays.
This is prosperity where'er we find
A heavenly solace in an earthly mind.

HUGH CROMPTON.

And turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight Sir Leoline
Led forth the Lady Geraldine.

CHRISTABEL.

AN unusually large party was expected on that evening at Keevor Hall. Mr. Painter, in furtherance of Julian's interests, had advised that some degree of hospitality should be shown, and though Mr. Greville was naturally averse to the society of strangers, he agreed to the propriety of the advice with the same willing

ness with which he would have agreed to any other proposal which had received the sanction of his daughter's favourable opinion. A series of dinners had in consequence been decided on, and the first of the series was on this evening to take place.

I was in the drawing-room with Mr. Painter and another gentleman when Susan entered, hastening down to receive her guests.

My attention was immediately and forcibly attracted by her appearance. Not because her dress was more studied than was usual to her, for now and at all times her taste was so simple and quiet, that her dress excited little observation—not from any frown of pain, or expression of inward turmoil, which jarred with the duties which were expected of her. But I was struck and even alarmed by the ethereal look of her whole frame. Her cheeks were as white as the white muslin of her dress—her skin as wan and transparent, her figure as fragile and drooping as the leaves of the white rose which Mr. Greville had gathered for her hair, and yet at the same time there was an unearthly look of steadfast and unruffled

serenity on her brow, which, though in one sense it harmonized, yet in another most strangely contrasted with her countenance.

That some, I might say fearful, struggle had taken place, I felt at once—nor was it hard to guess what that struggle had been. The moment for decision had come—the resolution had been taken. Julian, whose love had become a portion of herself, was to be yielded up—her bright hopes for his future life, her high desires for his welfare, were, so far as she was concerned, to be laid aside, and with doubt and fear he was to be consigned to another. The struggle I might guess, but that which I saw with surprise was that the struggle was past, the gravity was gone; she had that peculiar charm of countenance and sweetness of smile which is often observable in those who have come out of great suffering, whether of body or mind, but which never appears till hope and fear alike have withdrawn their conflict from the soul. As I observed her, some verses which I had once read, as addressed by Coleridge “to a lady in great pain,” came to my memory.

“As on the driving cloud the shiny bow,
That gracious thing made up of tears and light,
Mid the wild rack and rain that slants below,
Stands smiling forth unmoved and freshly bright ;

Even so—upon that face of thine,
On that beloved face whose look alone
(The soul’s translucence through her crystal shrine)
Has power to soothe all anguish but thine own.

A beauty hovers still and ne’er takes wing,
But with a silent charm compels the stern
And torturing Genius of the bitter spring
To shrink aback and cower upon its turn.”

The guests began to arrive, and Susan, though unused to society, received them with that quiet grace and self-possession, that intuitive power of saying and doing what is right, which I had often before remarked as peculiar to her, and which had sometimes caused me to wonder if any circumstances could have arisen in which she would have found herself at a loss how to act. She was sitting in the midst of an assembly of seven or eight ladies, most of whom were unknown to her, when Julian entered, his countenance as full of the cares and passions of this world as hers was above them. He looked at her, and I think he also was struck by her appear-

ance; for, after speaking to one or two of the gentlemen with whom he was acquainted, and after having been introduced to others, he went and stood by Susan's side.

She was conversing, and listening, with no affectation of strong interest, but with that kindness and gentleness of manner, which relieves from feelings of shyness and awkwardness, and encourages the communications of others. The ladies to whom she was attending were, I doubt not, amiable and attractive in their own homes and amid their own acquaintances, but they were chiefly middle-aged, and had no beauty or charm of manners or conversation to seize upon the interest of a stranger. They were talking, as people will talk who have not mind or courage to strike out of the beaten track, and who have no peculiar subjects of interest or sympathy with their companions. One lady's topic was the weather; an interesting topic certainly, and far preferable to others that could be mentioned, but which, after some discussion, is apt to become tedious. Another lady, more aspiring than the rest, selected her topics of

conversation from the “Court Circular.” She spoke, not only of the movements of his late Majesty King William the Fourth, but she mentioned the day on which her Grace the Duchess of — had left London for Scotland, and informed her hearers—who, as well as herself, were perfectly unacquainted and unconnected with the family—that his Grace the Duke had been detained in London by particular business. Another enlarged on the never-failing subject of babies, and recounted the marvellous number of teeth which her youngest child had cut at the age of four months; ending by asking Susan’s opinion as to the propriety of lancing the gums of infants on such occasions. And to each and all she was attending with the quiet kindness and forbearance which was but the due of her guests, and, assisted by one or two whose minds and manners were in advance of the more commonplace of the society, was wiling away without weariness the tedious interval before dinner; which had been, on this occasion, prolonged by the non-arrival of some families who lived at a distance from Keevor.

But Julian—who guessed, perhaps, some part, some small part, of that which had been passing in her mind, and to whom the conquest of self, and forbearance towards others, were principles unknown—stood by her side, in a kind of wondering amazement and admiration. And the feeling was at last expressed. At a pause in the conversation, he stooped down, and, regardless as he ever was of time and place, he said, in his low, melodious voice—

“ Susan, I believe you are an angel!”

A deep blush passed over her face, and she raised her eyes to his; but at the moment, the door opened, and Miss Vere entered.

I never shall forget her appearance. She had on this day laid aside her mourning, but in her dark morning gown it had scarcely attracted my attention. Now she came in like the fairy of some fairy tale, the brightest vision on which my eyes have ever rested. I do not know of what colours or materials her dress was composed,—it was fanciful and yet tasteful, bright and yet not gaudy;—I do not know that it would in general have been as

becoming as a more sober toilette: I remember her only as she entered the drawing-room on that evening. Her complexion, glowing as from some inward light of joy,—her eyes sparkling like brilliants. The cause of this I cannot tell: it may have been the effect of her dress, it may have been that the path of temptation is alluring, and that hopes, on which but a short time before she would not have permitted her eyes to rest, were beginning to excite her mind. I saw the sensation that her beauty made in the room; I saw that Susan and Julian both averted their eyes, as from a painful yet too attracting sight: and then dinner was announced, and I saw no more till I observed that Miss Vere was seated next to Julian, and that though sullen and gloomy at first, the sullenness and gloom had vanished long before Susan made her sign for the ladies to withdraw.

I remember little more of that evening. My thoughts became so painful, and the maze in which we appeared to be involved so intricate, that my attention was abstracted from those about me. But a short time

before the party broke up, I was again roused to observation, by the unpleasant discovery that Julian's attentions to Miss Vere were a subject of conversation. A lady who sat near me addressed a gentleman in a lively voice,—

“Why did you mislead me, Mr. French?—you told me that our member was to marry his cousin.”

“So I was told,” he replied, shortly.

“And you believe what you hear,—that is a bad plan. *I* never believe anything but that which my own eyes tell me is true.”

“Eyes are sometimes mistaken,” he said. “I was not acquainted with the gentleman, and I do not know whether he spoke at random, or from some knowledge of the circumstances.”

“Mine never are,” replied the lively lady: “and it would be hard to be mistaken in this case. I don't wonder at Mr. Julian Greville's choice. There is no comparison between the two young ladies. Miss Vere is a fine girl, and remarkably handsome.”

“I also think there is no comparison between the two,” said the gentleman, gravely.

“ Miss Greville has the sweetest countenance that I have ever seen.”

“ Now, Mr. French, you should have left that for me to say. Gentlemen may admire beauty, but ladies always discover the charms of a plain face. I am, however, more magnanimous than my sex, and I repeat boldly, that Mr. Julian Greville’s admiration is justly bestowed. What a handsome couple they will make; and they sing like syrens too.”

I turned away, sick at heart; and again my eyes rested, with a mixture of admiration, pain, fear, and wonder, on the sweet serene brow of her who was forsaken,—with wonder at her serenity, with pain at the fading fragile look of her whole appearance.

CHAPTER XIX.

Imagine something purer far,
More free from stain of clay,
Than Friendship, Love, or passion are,
Yet human still as they.
And if thy lip for love like this
No mortal word can frame,
Go ask of angels what it is,
And call it by that name.

MOORE.

THE following morning, as we left the breakfast-table, Susan followed Julian to the window, and looking up at him, said quietly,
“ I wish to speak to you alone, Julian, before you go out. Will you come in half an hour to my father’s room?”

He turned pale, and looked at her earnestly and inquiringly, but he said nothing.

“ In half an hour,” she repeated, and left him.

He folded his arms and stood gloomily leaning in the recess where she had found him.

" You are very thoughtful, Julian," Miss Vere said, gaily, as she passed.

He turned from her impatiently, and threw open the window; but it was a chilly autumnal day, and with the same hasty, irritated movement, he closed it again.

George Vivian, who had been talking to Mr. Painter, now approached him.

" Mr. Painter is anxious not to be later than eleven this morning," he said, persuasively; " you will be ready, will you not? It will not do to be absent another day. He was not pleased at your returning yesterday."

" I wish Mr. Painter was hanged!" Julian said, petulantly; then hastily adding—" Yes, I suppose I shall go," left the room.

He could endure the suspense of his agitated imaginations no longer, but went at once to Mr. Greville's study. As he raised his hand to knock at the door, that voice which still had so strange a power over his waywardness and fretfulness, in soft, calm accents, fell upon his ear.

“Praise the Lord, oh! my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

“Who forgiveth all thy sin and healeth all thy infirmities.

“Who saveth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness.”

The words were familiar to him, but they startled him now; their calmness so strangely contrasted with the turmoil of his troubled heart; their tone of thankful confidence so different from the tone which he had expected to greet his appearance;—he paused, irresolute; then the temper of restless petulance vanishing from its dominion, in an altered mood of mind he knocked and entered the room.

Susan was seated by her father, reading, as from her childhood upwards she had been in the habit of doing, the Psalms and Lessons for the day.

“Go on, Susan,” Julian said, seating himself in a large arm-chair, “I like to hear you.”

She blushed deeply at his entrance, but read on, steadily and unfalteringly, no other

sign betraying to her father or to him the agitation which his unexpected appearance had caused her.

Mr. Greville traced with his finger, on his own large Bible, every word she read. When she ceased, he looked at her with his kind smile, and closing the book, said to Julian—“ How prettily Susan reads—I am glad you heard her.”

His usual habit was to go to his flowers immediately after his daughter’s reading, but considering Julian’s visit as paid to himself, he remained seated, endeavouring in his childish way to entertain him. Julian’s restlessness began to return, he got up, fidgeted from side to side of the roasting fire which Mr. Greville loved, and answered his questions at random.

“ I am sure, papa,” Susan said, after waiting for a few minutes, “ Julian would not wish to keep you from going out. I asked him to come here this morning, as I wished to talk to him without being disturbed.”

“ Thank you, Susan; then I think I had

better go as usual. You will entertain Julian better than I can do; won't she, my dear Julian?" with a smile and a shake of the head; "and it is a pity that I should lose this morning sun—these autumn days are sadly chilly. Marshall will be waiting, too," and having thus excused himself for his incivility, he got up from his seat.

Susan helped him to put on his hat and great coat, and opened the glass door that led from the study into the garden.

"You will remember to look after the fire, Susan," he said, looking back; "but you always do remember."

His movements were very slow, and Julian's patience could scarcely endure the delay; yet when he was gone, and Susan had closed the door, he almost wished to recal him again. He looked flushed and heated, and made some nervous remark on the size of the fire.

"You are not used to papa's room," Susan said, with a smile, and she placed a screen before it, and pushed the large arm-chair nearer to the window; then with a look in-

viting him to sit down, and placing her work before her, though she did not touch it, she began at once in a quiet, steady voice—

“ I want to speak to you, Julian—on what subject, perhaps, you can guess; and you must let me speak, and not interrupt me, for there are two or three things which I wish you to understand. You must promise me, too, not to be hurt or angry at anything I say, for I assure you that I only mean what is best for both of us.”

She paused, and looked at him. He was sitting nearly opposite to her, with downcast eyes; and to this beginning he made no remark. But the beginning *was* made, and she went on more easily.

“ You know, Julian, that I have never thought you perfectly understood the circumstances in which we were placed. We both gave our promises that we would *consider* our grandfather’s wish, and that we would *endeavour* to fulfil it; but this was all. We were free, as any other two people are free. I don’t think that when first you came to Keevor you remembered this sufficiently; and

I myself—I had been so accustomed to the idea of the engagement—that I think I, as well as you, looked upon it in a wrong light. I feel now that we were both mistaken, and that I was wrong, very wrong to allow you on so short an acquaintance to bind yourself to me. I feel it now; and, dear Julian, I will do all in my power to undo what has been done. I see now, very strongly, that I am not suited to you, and we will be free again."

She ended rather abruptly; when it came to the point her voice trembled, and she paused at once, before Julian could discover the symptoms of agitation or regret.

He looked at her as if he scarcely understood her.

"Free!" at last, he repeated fearfully.

"Yes, Julian, it must be so."

Perhaps there had been moments when, following where his restless spirit, his impetuous desires led him, the wish for freedom had crossed his mind; but it was forgotten now.

"Ah, Susan!" he said, humbly, "your patience with me is quickly worn out."

She had been prepared for vehement reproaches: for his tone of tenderness she was not prepared, and her voice was less steady, and her colour a little heightened, as she said,

“I feared you must have thought me only too patient.”

“Susan,” he exclaimed, passionately, “why will you speak to me thus?” and he came towards her as he spoke; but she was herself again.

“My dear Julian,” she said, with a slight movement of her head, “you must let me speak to you quietly. We must not allow a moment’s feeling to be our guide. Once we did so, and, I fear, it has caused you much unhappiness—it shall not be so again. I promised to think for you, and I have thought—it is best for both of us that this engagement should be broken.—And it *is* broken,” she added, with emphasis.

“Is it come to this?” he said again, in his humble, reproachful tone. “Ah, Susan! I see how it is; I am too weak, too erring, too earthly, for you and your purity; and yet, I did not think you would so soon have forsaken me.”

"Was it to forsake, Julian—to wait as I have done—when I have seen, long seen, that you love me no more?" She stooped her head, and took up her needle, to conceal the deep blush that mounted to her temples.

And he, too, cast down his eyes, and remained silent. The delusion was over. He saw Susan's love, and his unworthiness; he felt his weakness, and her strength, and awaking "from the spells that bound him, he sighed only for her who so fondly loved him." We cling, it has been said, with a strange fondness, to that which we must abandon, and the strong resolve to separate often makes separation impossible. It may have been this feeling that guided him, or it may have been, that when he searched his heart, Susan was even dearer to him than all beside; but certainly Florence was at this moment forgotten.

He spoke at last, and it was in that softened sorrowful tone which touched her so deeply, and almost destroyed the perceptions of right and wrong in her mind.

"You do not know me, Susan—you do not even yet understand me. I know well that I

am not what I should be—unworthy, oh, how unworthy of you!—led astray by every breath that passes by; but I told you how it would be—I told you that to be my wife would be no easy happy task—that I wanted a guide to be loving and gentle with me, as my mother would have been—and you promised to be such a one to me:—even if I wandered from the right way, you promised to bear with me, and never to forsake me; and now, Susan, now you repent—you cast me away—you do not love me?”

With a violent effort she preserved her composure, but she did preserve it.

“ My promise, Julian,” she said, gently, but seriously, “ was to be fulfilled as your wife—as your wife I never would forsake you; but my duty now is different; and I should indeed be false to my promise to love you, and to think for you, if I allowed you to speak your vows to me in the sight of God, while your heart was given to another.”

He was awed by the seriousness of her manner, but at every word she spoke her

power over him revived, and there was the earnestness of truth in the tones that burst from him—"Susan, I love but you; Susan, dearest Susan, can you not forgive me?"

She was silent—she dared not speak.

He came towards her, and took her hand in his, while bending low he said, with reproachful tenderness—"You doubt my love—ah, Susan! forgive me, you may have cause to do so; but have I not cause to doubt yours? I know that you have been like an angel, Susan—that you have borne with me as none others would; but now, now, you talk of resigning me, and your eye is tearless, and your voice is calmer than mine. Is it nothing to give me up? if you truly loved me, would you not bear with me still?"

"No, Julian," she said, in a low voice, and not daring to raise her eyes to his face; "for those who truly love, love the happiness and the welfare of others more than their own joy. I do, most willingly," and though her voice was low, it was firm—"resign your love, because I feel that I am no longer able to make

you happy, and because, dear Julian, the engagement, as it now stands, does but lead you into temptation."

"Temptation!" he exclaimed, passionately; "Ah, Susan, without you what will become of me? I have, I own it, I have sinned against the perfect love I promised you. Would she had never come here to destroy my happiness and yours—is it not yours also? Will you not tell me so?"—but he did not wait for an answer; he went on, excitedly—"I am not happy, Susan, I am wretched—miserable; and you only, your voice only, can give me peace. It is not my love that has wandered; it is my weakness, it is my sinking, dark, troubled heart that tempts me; and where will it lead me if you forsake me? Ah, Susan! are you so hard, so unforgiving? Will you not pity me—will you not bear with me still?"

Her reason, her judgment, her resolution were failing. She was weak also, where Julian was concerned—but before she yielded, she spoke once more with seriousness and gravity.

"Julian, I must ask you, and you must look at me and answer me truly. Is Florence

nothing to you?—you are destroying, perhaps you have already destroyed, her peace of mind. There must be no more wandering—we cannot both have your love. Henceforward, Julian, forgive me if I speak harshly, you must hear the truth before it is too late—henceforward, if we renew our vows, you cannot love her, and be free from guilt.” She paused, and fixed her eyes anxiously upon him—“Dear Julian, ponder well—do not deceive yourself or me. It may make me happy to receive your love, but not a love falsely or weakly given. Dear Julian, if you were to repent when it is too late, think what our misery would be!”

“I have no choice, Susan,” he said, with a calm decision which carried conviction to her mind—“I am not free, I am yours—yours only, if you will but let me be so.” He took her hand, looked fondly and anxiously at her, then with his sweet, playful smile, added—“Will you not revoke your words?—we are not free?”

And so once more the engagement was renewed.

As Julian entered the hall, he found George Vivian and Mr. Painter waiting; the former endeavouring to soothe his companion, who, notwithstanding his small voice and meek demeanour, was betraying symptoms of a displeasure that was far from "satisfactory."

"It will never do, Mr. Vivian. Mr. Julias is not fit to be a member of the most distinguished assembly in the world. Punctuality is the soul of business. I am sorry to say that Mr. Julias has disappointed me. I consider his conduct as very far from satisfactory."

George Vivian shook his head at Julian, with a smile; and while he was looking for his hat, approached him to recommend an apology to Mr. Painter.

"Oh, George!" Julian said, with much feeling, "I cannot think of Mr. Painter now. You do not know how miserable I have been, or what Susan is. You blame me as she does—but you would not have forgiven me as she has done. I am happy again now, and only wonder why such an angel has been sent from heaven to bless me."

And George Vivian was disposed to wonder also, and, perhaps, at times more than to wonder; but not often. His was one of those rare natures which can love without a spark of hope, or a thought of self.

It has been often said, that lovers' quarrels are a renewal of love. I am rather disposed to agree with those who doubt the truth of this observation. Something of outward ardour it may renew, but it destroys something inward and far more precious—the perfect rest—the perfect confidence of an unshaken attachment. Perhaps, however, it was my observation of Susan and Julian which gave me this opinion.

No one could doubt, who saw them on that evening (excepting Mr. Greville, who slumbered as peacefully as if his dearest hopes had not been within an inch of destruction) that some reconciliation, some “renewal of love,” had taken place; but the feeling which it inspired in me was not one of peace. Susan's cheek and eye were bright again, though she looked very fragile still, but they had not the

serenity of the last evening. She had then been above, she was now again in the midst of the agitations of earthly passion.

Julian was devoted to her. He scarcely left her side. His eyes sought hers at every word he spoke, as if to read approval there. It was not that repose which had once been between them, and which, even though interrupted of late, had rather seemed interrupted than broken.

We were quite alone. Mr. Painter had only been an occasional guest, and the change, therefore, the transfer of Julian's attentions, was very apparent. I saw the first dawn of fear on Miss Vere's countenance. When we came into the drawing-room, Julian placed himself by Susan's side, and began to talk to her very earnestly; he had returned late, and had not seen her since the morning. Miss Vere approached him and asked him to sing. He declined, not coldly, but gravely. I am sure he was anxious to do right—to undo as quickly, yet as gently as possible, what he had done. As soon as he had answered her, he resumed his conversation with Susan. She

looked annoyed, yet not very much so, and turned away. Shortly afterwards, Susan left the room on a message for her father, and Julian took up a piece of paper, and began to write. Susan returned while he was writing, but, before he had finished, she was called away again to make her father's tea. When he had read over what he had written, he laid it on the table, with a smile, and joined Mr. Vivian and myself. Miss Vere had been watching him with intense curiosity ; she now approached the table, and laid her hand upon the paper, with a glance at Julian. He did not forbid her reading it, and her eye fell upon the following lines—

“ Thy softly gliding step—thy light, fair form ;
The lingering music of thy gentle voice ;
Thine eye, nor sad, nor yet that bids rejoice—
Dark as the ebon of the gathering storm,
Yet with a lustre so serenely sweet,
It wins the heart, the while unconscious why.
The smile on thy pale cheek that suddenly
Plays as the lightning’s flash the tempests greet.
These are thy charms—not beauty’s matchless dower,
Speaking the sweetness of thine even mind—
Calm duty’s steadfast strength if storms should lower,
And smiles of gentler love in days more kind ;
Shining above us as a pale, pure star,
Yet drooped to earth as fairest flowers are.”

The verses certainly had the merit of giving a faithful picture of Susan. Florence could not doubt their meaning. She laid them down, and went to the pianoforte, but her eye still watched the table on which they were laid, and she saw them placed before Susan on her return, and she watched the deep blush that followed their perusal. Then turning her head away, she began to play vehemently and passionately, but the vehemence lasted only for a time—it died away in music unspeakably melancholy.

Susan's eye rested painfully upon her. Willingly, most willingly, she would have sent Julian to her side—her heart ached for her cousin; and I am persuaded that Julian's renewed attention to herself did not compensate for the sorrow that she felt in causing grief to her. But Susan's judgment was a clear and sound one; and painful as it was to see Florence suffer, she felt that she now was but learning what sooner or later must be learnt; and though, perhaps, abruptly taught, yet for Julian's happiness, and possibly for her own also, the more abruptly the less painfully—

the less of fear and hope, of anxiety and doubt, those strengtheners of feeling and additions to pain; and she endured (it was endurance, doubt it who will) the unceasing and apparent devotion which Julian showed, without an attempt to conceal or to escape from it.

I sometimes wondered by what magic George Vivian so often, and so quickly entered into Susan's feelings. He was reading at the further end of the room, as he usually did when we were alone. He had never attempted to make much acquaintance with Miss Vere. They were not suited to each other. I saw Susan once or twice glance towards him with an unexpressed wish in her countenance, but I think even his back was turned towards her; yet, suddenly, he laid his book aside, and went to the pianoforte. He asked for a song, and he was coldly repulsed; he playfully pressed for it, and at length was coldly gratified. He entered into conversation, as I had never heard him speak before, gaily, animatedly; and Florence relaxed from her sullenness at last, and though her

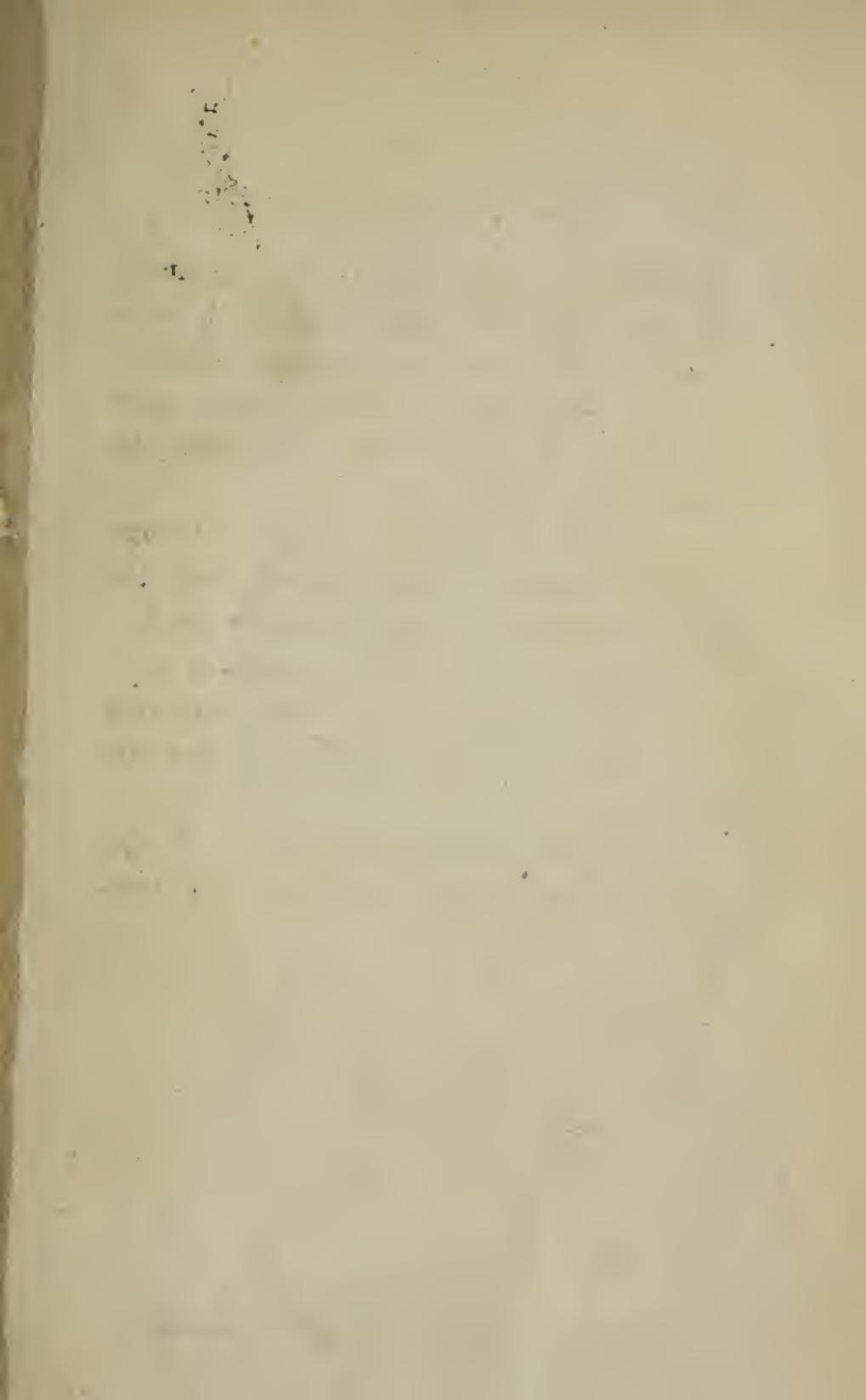
laugh was louder than the laugh of happiness, and her voice had occasionally a sad, occasionally a harsh sound, yet he was rewarded for his endeavours. Susan's spirit grew lighter, and Miss Vere was saved from the additional pain of neglect.

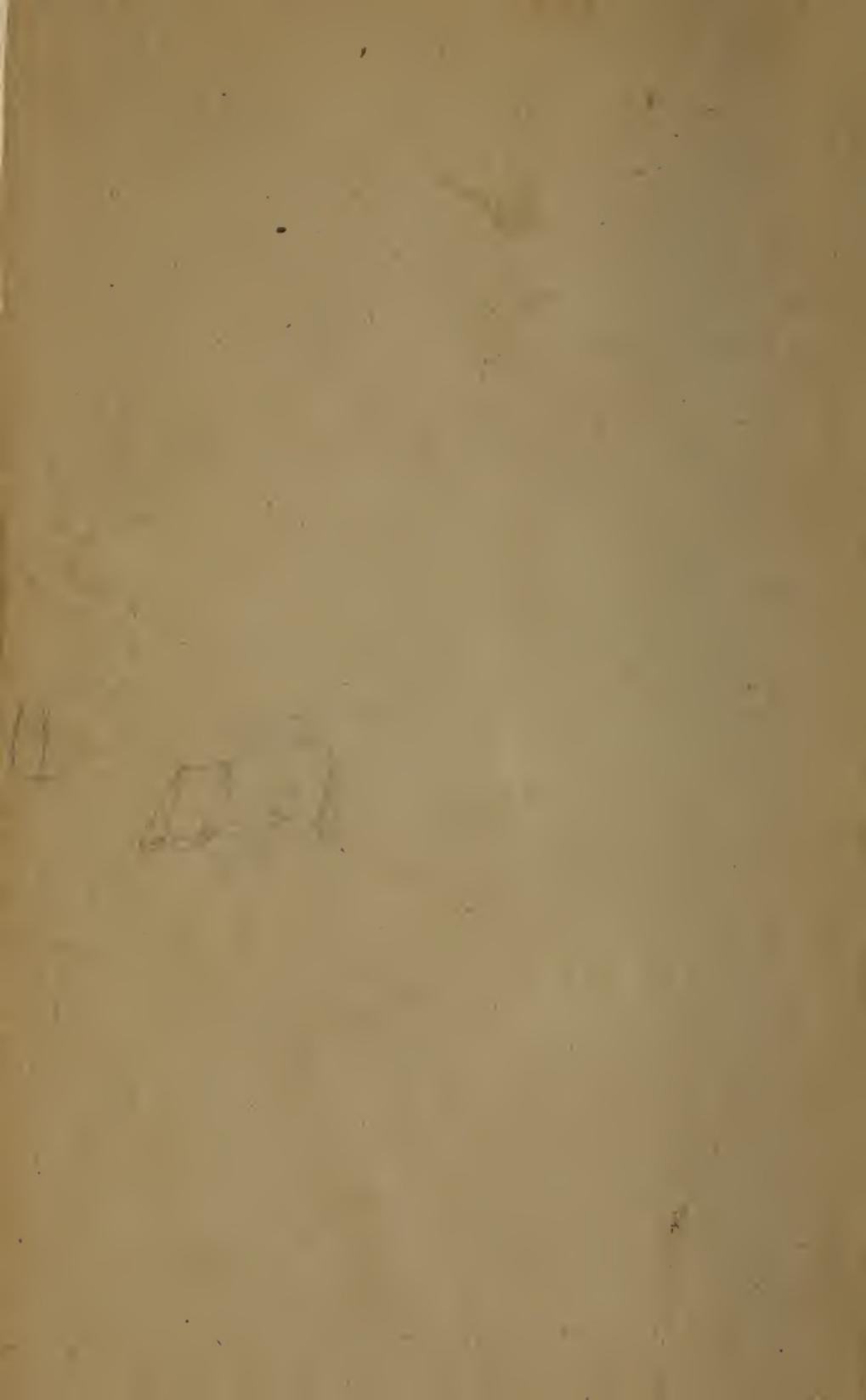
"Sunday, to-morrow, Julian," George Vivian remarked, as they passed along the corridor together; "a day of rest for you."

"A day of rest in more senses than one," Julian answered, feelingly; "the beginning of a new week, and I trust of a new life also."

Oh! words, how falsely prophetic. It *was* the beginning of a new and bitter life to him.

END OF VOL I.





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